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THE COLLECTED PAPERS  
OF  
SIR A. W. WARD

VOLUME TWO  
HISTORICAL (ii)



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

C. F. CLAY, MANAGER

LONDON : FETTER LANE, E.C. 4



NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN CO.

BOMBAY

CALCUTTA } MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

MADRAS

TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO.  
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COLLECTED PAPERS  
HISTORICAL, LITERARY, TRAVEL  
AND MISCELLANEOUS

BY

SIR ADOLPHUS WILLIAM WARD

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MASTER OF PETERHOUSE

VOLUME TWO  
HISTORICAL (ii)

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## CORRIGENDA

### VOL. I

- p. 32 note, *read* "peace is my dear delight"
- p. 115 note, *read* M. Doeberl, *Bayern und Frankreich*, vol. I (Munich, 1900), p. 14.
- p. 261, l. 12, *read* back into the scabbard.
- p. 282, l. 3, *read* "crowning mercy"
- p. 331, l. 9, *for* aunt *read* sister
- p. 336, l. 30, *read* from Burke and Gentz to
- p. 342, l. 24, *for* dedication, etc., *read* Advertisement touching a Holy War
- p. 375 note 1, l. 5, *for* bis *read* bei

### VOL. II

- p. 171 note, *read* Prince Lewis Ferdinand
- p. 272, l. 27, *read* de St Pierre
- p. 282, l. 19, *for* they even *read* they were
- p. 291 note, *read* das Deutsche
- p. 302, l. 24, *dele* Sir
- p. 323, l. 31, *read* Germaniae
- p. 340, l. 7, *read* Samwer
- p. 347, l. 18, *read* tell; although

# COLLECTED PAPERS

## HISTORICAL

### 16. BURTON'S REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, April 24, 1880.)

SENSITIVE minds have frequently been distressed by the fact that political necessity, real or supposed, is wont to exercise an overruling influence upon the course of legislation, and that the genesis of measures which have indisputably proved beneficent in their results is at times a less attractive study than those results themselves. The history of the Union between England and Scotland, which appropriately occupies considerable space in Mr Burton's work, forms a case in point. It is, indeed, burdened by no such unrighteous reminiscences as those attaching to the history of another Union, achieved about a century later. Mr Burton is able to appeal to previous investigations of his own, which his predecessor, Lord Stanhope, has acknowledged to be satisfactory, as having completely refuted the "odious suspicions" of corruption that for a time hung round the transactions of the year 1706. But, though neither Lord Banff was bribed by his £11. 2s., nor others by more powerfully persuasive

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Reign of Queen Anne*. By John Hill Burton, D.C.L., Historiographer Royal for Scotland. 3 vols. William Blackwood and Sons, 1880.



sums, it is well known that another noxious ingredient was not absent from the cement of the Scottish Union. The demeanour of the lesser country had been successful in intimidating the statesmanship of the greater, until, as Mr Burton says, it was well understood that all resistance to the Treaty would be in the former, while at Westminster even the possibility of successful opposition was taken away by means of a lawyer's device. All practical English politicians, not blinded by Jacobite sympathies, had come to recognise the necessity that Scotland must be held closer if she was to be held at all; it was not love, nor even in the first instance self-interest, that brought the two countries to the embrace in which, of old, King James I had hoped to see them locked. The Scottish feeling of bitterness against England, in so far as it was not merely the result of ancient antipathies, was not altogether unreasonable. Mr Burton shows how rapidly that feeling had grown to the extravagant and almost frenzied height which it had reached by the time of the Act of Security. The Restoration monarchy, which owed so much to Scotland, and not the Protectorate, had hit Scotland hard by the Navigation Act. In the Restoration edition, the Act was "shaken free of the defect that gave a share in its beneficence to Scotland"; for it had been "among the Englishman's denunciations of the Protectorate Government that it admitted the impoverished and sordid Scots to a participation in the sources of England's wealth." Then came the tragic Darien blunder, unredeemed by the glorious victory of Zubaccanti, and King William's all but dying message commending the Union as the last and

only remedy for the existing relations between the two countries. It would indeed seem that the collapse of the negotiations of 1702 was owing to the apprehension of the English Commissioners that their acquiescence in the Scotch demand for Free-trade would ultimately be disavowed. But that which brought the later negotiations to a more successful issue was no argument or claim of an economic nature. It was, in a word, that Act of Security to which the Lord High Commissioner in the first instance, with a very intelligible instinct, refused to give the royal assent. The Act put into words a sentiment which before long found, perhaps, as extraordinary a mode of expression as has ever marked the international relations of two States not on the eve of actual warfare. Mr Burton tells with much spirit and frankness the strange story of the seizure of the *Worcester*, and of the judicial murders which followed. He calls the former, "if we look on it in its abstract nature...as absolute an act of treachery as the massacre of Glencoe," though it was primarily intended by way of reprisal for the seizure in the Thames of the Scots Indian and African Company's vessel *Annandale*. "The Scotch Plot," which Mr Burton introduces as "another incident of the period," proved a mere flash in the pan; but the fears aroused by it found their way into the Queen's Speech and the House of Lords, and helped further to charge the already heavily-laden atmosphere. Mr Burton takes the opportunity of giving some account of the notorious Simon Fraser of Lovat, of whom Dr Doran had so much to say in his last gossip about the Jacobites, and of whom the late Mountstuart Elphinstone, as he told

Mr Burton, discovered the "absolute duplicate" in an Afghan chief. On this occasion Simon Fraser's effort was of that tentative sort which in history only seems ridiculous when it is not, sooner or later, followed by a more serious venture of the same description. The Act of Security left the future very much to take care of itself; but Mr Burton has judiciously pointed out that the supplementary "Act anent Peace and War," provided against the power falling at once and absolutely into the hands of anyone who might be strong enough to make himself master of the situation at the Queen's death. The Act introduced a vital change into the Scottish constitution; but, then, it must be allowed that the Scottish Constitution was generally, in a far more marked degree than the English, at the mercy of the elements. The reason of this lay partly in what Mr Burton elsewhere notices—"the easy slovenly practice of the estates of Scotland." The Scottish Parliament, which now assumed the right of approving or preventing a declaration of war, had, less than a century before, been a mere instrument in the hands of the Crown. It is a curious, though, to be sure, an idle question, whether Scottish Parliamentary life would have endured under a separate Government.

In general, we notice with pleasure in these volumes the absence of any tendency, such as the very fulness of the annals of this reign is only too apt to produce, towards making too much of the personal element in national history. Not that Mr Burton withholds his judgments of persons, which are often both shrewd and generous. Of Queen Anne, narrow-minded though she was in most directions, it is indeed difficult to think



without a certain kindness, more especially when one remembers her domestic misfortunes. Her "promised children were so numerous that it is a question whether there were more than seventeen." Six only survived long enough to be baptized; of whom, as is well known, one, William Duke of Gloucester, lived into his twelfth year, when his premature though not altogether surprising death was mourned as a national calamity. That in an age which still clung to such superstitions as "touching for the evil," these losses should have been interpreted as a divine judgment upon the Queen for her impiety as a daughter, is intelligible enough. But it was these very losses which, as Mr Burton observes, intensified in the Queen the sense of isolation that other causes helped to produce. Her maternal relations declined to rally round her, her uncle, the Earl of Clarendon, actually refusing to take the oath of allegiance. Her husband was a cipher, and her children were dead. Her throne was to go to strangers and foreigners; and, thus,

perhaps it befell that the Queen's personal friends had far more influence on the destinies of her reign than her husband or her nearest blood relations.

This is at once a reasonable and a generous way of accounting for what is so often ridiculed as nothing but Mrs Morley's infatuation for Mrs Freeman. The scandals against the earlier part of Marlborough's career, again, Mr Burton dismisses in the same generous tone. Marlborough is properly treated as the real hero of this History—a genius to whom justice is done even out of the mouth of a jealous rival such as Peterborough. One noticeable feature in Marlborough as a commander

was his successful endeavour to preserve a decent and respectable tone among his troops, and even to encourage religious observances among them. This is all the more curious when the general English system of enlistment, as practised in that age, is borne in mind. Mr Burton has very graphically illustrated the recruiting practices of Sergeant Kite and his fellows; and it is certainly remarkable that out of materials thus collected Marlborough should have formed the army which, after Blenheim, solemnized the morrow of victory by the celebration of a religious service at the head of every regiment. It would appear that the Navy was less perfectly regenerated than the Army—doubtless because of the “greater temptations to rapacity” besetting the junior service. Peterborough bitterly complains to Godolphin of the scandalous greed of admirals and sailors, which, together with their ignorance, will, he fears, prove ruinous to the cause of the Allies.

Of Peterborough himself, Mr Burton could not fail to write with something of the picturesqueness which any mention of that erratic hero's name seems naturally to call forth in an historian; and the following lively passage draws an effective contrast between the most brilliant figure of the Spanish War and the refugee General, the memory of whose failure has survived that of his services. We may add that Mr Burton declines to see in the defeat of Almanza more than “the typical drop in the bucket—the last incident that proclaimed the victorious side”; and that he suggests a measure of consolation for our national pride in the fact that “the number of British soldiers in the battle, if they exceeded three, did not reach four, thousand”:

We have already seen that Galway was a soldier of the French type; and, though it may not be said that Peterborough was a soldier of the English, or indeed of any type, he was such a soldier as England only could produce and tolerate. The gravity and supreme importance of the great game of war had, by long traditional influences, impressed on the French soldier the solemnity of everything, from the grandest efforts of heroism to the smallest pedantries of discipline, while he is on active duty; and whatever frivolities or eccentricities may live in his character are dormant there. That Galway was the French soldier cultivated to a high type made any earnest co-operation between him and Peterborough impossible; it would have been as if in the performance of some solemn religious rite a bishop of the Church of England and a ranting Muggletonian were appointed to co-operate. Both these generals were men of high heroism and generous nature; and, where sagacity has been employed in discovering animosities and jealousies between them, the utter unconformity of their natures may suffice to account for the disastrous results. That they acted apart and had separate careers was more the doing of Galway than of Peterborough. The distinguished French commander acted on the impulses of the respectable man who, seeking a correct and decorous walk through life, finds himself thrown into company and co-operation with that eccentric discarder of conventionalities colloquially described as a "harum-scarum." Anything that distinguished Marlborough from the French commanders was in a different shape—that of a vast superiority over them in their own special qualities. This has been emphatically acknowledged by the great Napoleon, not only in the reverence paid to his memory, but the efforts to make Marlborough's military career a lesson to the officers in the Imperial service of France.

The author of this *History*, as we have already indicated, is by no means prone to overrate the influence of personal character and personal motive upon the progress of national events. This is nowhere more

apparent than in his account of the occurrences which led to the catastrophe of the Whigs in 1710, and indirectly prepared the conclusion of peace. He cites, in order to supplement or correct it, the saying of Hallam, that "the House of Bourbon would probably not have reigned beyond the Pyrenees but for Sarah and Abigail at Queen Anne's toilet." It is only fair to add that "the sagest of historians" had, a sentence or two previously, attributed the downfall of the Whigs to the coincidence with the Court intrigues of the popular clamour against Sacheverell's impeachment. Less judicious writers have attributed to one or the other cause individually a result which was partially due to the cooperation of both. Thus, Mr Burton cites from the historian Paul Chamberlen a review of the consequences of the "one man" Sacheverell's conduct, which reads something like a prose version of the famous invective against the Corsican usurper in the *Rejected Addresses*. Of the Sacheverell commotion itself, however, we have no hesitation in saying that Mr Burton has furnished an account which future historians of Queen Anne's reign will do well not to overlook. He must, we think, be allowed to have made it tolerably clear, not only that the debate on the impeachment, rather than the punishment to which the impeachment might lead, was the essential object of its promoters, but also that, notwithstanding the popularity gained by their nominal victim, the purpose of the Whigs was in some measure fulfilled. The extreme paucity of Jacobite references in the debate furnished the best testimony possible to the weakness of the Jacobite cause; and Sacheverell himself, following



either the advice of his friends or the promptings of his own discretion, in the course of the trial spontaneously offered an earnest prayer that the succession might be perpetuated in the illustrious House of Hanover. Nor is it without significance to find that, at all events according to Burnet, the general impression as to the Queen's favouring Sacheverell was erroneous; inasmuch as, though several of her chaplains openly showed their goodwill towards him, the Queen herself told the Bishop "that it was a bad sermon, and that he," the Doctor, "deserved well to be punished for it." Queen Anne's observation, as reported by the Lati-tudinarian prelate, is, however, unlikely to have troubled the mind of the assailant of comprehension and toleration much more than the four episcopal speeches against him in the House of Lords. He belonged to a school which was rarely troubled by doubts as to the positions maintained by it; and his own mind seems to have been of a class to which uncertainty is, so to speak, unknown. At the same time, Mr Burton is to be commended for his desire to do justice to a man standing "alone among the objects of great popular contests, as one who has had no historical vindicator." It certainly seems hard, because the papers read by Sacheverell at his trial in his own defence were very different in tone from his sermons, to conclude at once that the former were not of his own composition. In Mr Burton's opinion, the sermons, as well as the papers in question, "are works of ability—of so much ability that one can quite understand his suiting different tones of thought and language to different conditions." Altogether, the choice of a

victim was not quite so fortunate for the Whigs as they may have at first supposed; and undoubtedly Mr Burton is right in blaming their want of judgment in selecting a clergyman. The days of Queen Anne were nearer than our own are to the times of clerical, more especially episcopal, martyrs. Yet it seems as if at first they had actually thought of flying high in this direction, and of calling to account the Bishop of Exeter, Offspring Blackall, the eminent High Churchman (whose Puritan *prænomen* still survives among the descendants of his family in Essex). A combatant of the lighter sort, on the same side, was Dr William King, whose ready pen vindicated the High Church champion against the *Modern Fanatic* of William Bisset. Mr Burton has some curious notes on both these popular controversialists, and shows incidentally how, in the great art of literary mystification, King was, not indeed the instructor, but the predecessor, of Swift.

## 17. GODOLPHIN<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, February 2, 1889.)

IF a lively and well-instructed interest in some of the chief branches of State affairs, coupled with unmistakable dialectical ability and considerable fluency of style, form a sufficient equipment for the political biographer, there is little reason to regret that the Life of Godolphin has till now remained unwritten. Mr Elliot's personal experience cannot but have given him some special insight into things, fortunately or unfortunately, common to most periods of our Parliamentary life, and something like an hereditary feeling must have impelled him to become a student and critic of English foreign policy. He pleads, for and against, with a skill and an intrepidity which recall Macaulay in his most unhesitating moods, and apparently follows the same model in the mould and manner of his diction. We speak of this volume as a political biography, inasmuch as for a biography of Godolphin in which the personal element should come to the front, the time, if it ever existed, has long since passed away. The very outward form and features of Mr Elliot's hero, as appears from certain points of contrast between Kneller's bust and Boyer's description of his appearance, are to some extent debatable; we may, perhaps, add that Macky, who must have been well acquainted with

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Sidney, Earl of Godolphin, K.G., Lord High Treasurer of England 1702 to 1710.* By the Hon. Hugh Elliot. London, Longmans and Co., 1888.

him, describes him as "of slow Speech, with an awful, serious Deportment," and "of a low Stature; thin, with a very black and stern Countenance." Concerning his private life, Mr Elliot, though he prints some interesting extracts from the MS. family correspondence in the British Museum, has not been able to add very much to the scanty knowledge already generally accessible. On the other hand, he has made a very attractive chapter out of the history of the Lord Treasurer's paternal ancestry and of the ancient Cornish estate, in the country between the Lizard and the Land's End, to which the family appears to owe its outlandish name. Its most distinguished member in earlier times was Sir Francis Godolphin, who held the Governorship of the Scilly Isles under Queen Elizabeth, and whose anything but unneeded precautions against the Spaniards in the years after the dispersion of the Great Armada illustrate the want of finality which detracted from the grandeur of that event in contemporary eyes. His grandson and namesake was the father of the younger and more celebrated Sidney Godolphin, and the brother of the elder, whose friendship was prized by Clarendon, and who seems to have been the author of some, if not all, of the verses ascribed to his nephew, as well as of those acknowledged by himself. The future Lord Treasurer was, both through his mother and through the marriage of his aunt Penelope, a kinsman of the house of Berkeley; and it may have been his cousin, the favourite of Charles II bestknown as Earl of Falmouth, who first introduced him to Court, where we find him as page in the year 1667. He was the third son in a family

of sixteen children; and, though he was wide enough awake to his opportunities to push himself into Parliament for Helston by the side of the eldest, and ahead of the second, brother, his inheritance was trifling, amounting to 120*l.*, perhaps even to not more than 40*l.*, a year. Thus, like other of his brothers, he had to become an office-seeker, and early acquired that love of place which, notwithstanding repeated resignations and continual protestations of his desire for retirement and a country life, seems to have clung to him to the last. When, however, his official services came to an end, after extending over the better part of four reigns, he found himself left with an income not exceeding 1000*l.* a year; and it was only the death of his eldest brother, to whose estate he succeeded, which enabled him to live at ease during the two remaining years of his life.

With the brief and melancholy history of his marriage with Margaret Blague, so well known through the sympathetic relation of Evelyn, ends, as Godolphin's biographer confesses, all that we know of his domestic life. To this touching revelation of a tenderness of heart, lovable whether we meet with it in a Godolphin, a Temple, or a Swift, we need not again refer; the connexion between Godolphin and Evelyn in itself forms a ray of light amidst the obscurity of the statesman's personal biography; and it is pleasing to find the latter, when a Commissioner of the Treasury under James II, securing attention to his friend's claim for arrears of outlay and salary, and in the next reign (as is well known) appointing him Treasurer of the new Greenwich Hospital. Evelyn and Godolphin were



doubtless drawn together by common tastes as well as mutual liking; though, by the way, Mr Elliot's conjecture that the scheme for the improvement of St James's Park, set on foot in 1702, actually emanated from Godolphin himself as Lord Treasurer, is, of course, conjecture only. Of his personal tastes and habits in general we know next to nothing. He was fond of horse-racing; and the tradition of his love of gambling mentioned by Mr Elliot is confirmed by a passage in the Diary of Bubb Dodington (January 25th, 1753), who states that, by way of assenting to the Princess of Wales's expressed dislike of the public playing of forbidden games, he "mentioned the precautions which Lord Treasurer Godolphin used to conceal his passion for play, though he practised it to the last." Mr Elliot adds that he "probably" had a taste for the fine arts, since Methuen is found apprising him of a sale of pictures about to be held in Spain. He was also, it appears, fond of chess like George I, and fond of port like the younger Pitt and other less eminent statesmen.

But, when we turn from these scanty details about Godolphin in private to the records of his public life, is the case materially altered? We are willing, though Mr Elliot gives no grounds for his opinion in the way of evidence, to take it on trust that Godolphin was "a sententious, rather than a skilful or persuasive, speaker." Written remains of his, except his share as a young man in the family correspondence, and possibly some unidentified pieces of verse, are not in existence. Beyond a doubt, and notwithstanding his early eagerness for self-advancement, his biographer correctly

describes him as an essentially modest man; and his modesty must in a sense have stood in the way of his fame. On the other hand, it is possible that "the vexatious indistinctness of outline" of which Mr Elliot complains, and which he has sought in some measure to remedy, may have exaggerated the qualities of his political genius in the notions of posterity. Let us, at all events, see how far Godolphin's biographer has succeeded in making good his contention that the subject of his book "was one of those men whose merits rarely receive the full recognition which they deserve."

As a rule, Godolphin's claims to political eminence have been based upon his achievements as a Finance Minister; and, in his introductory summary of the characteristics of his hero Mr Elliot accordingly states that, not only were certain financial changes of the highest importance—the raising of money by life and terminable annuities, the issue of Exchequer Bills, the establishment of the Bank of England, and the funding of the National Debt—made under Godolphin's headship of the Treasury, but that an unprecedented vigilant frugality was equally distinctive of his administration. As to the great financial measures passed during his tenure of office, this biography, however, contains no further information: to enter into any description of "the Tonnage Bill from which sprang the Bank of England," and "the Recoinage Bill, which effected the restoration of public credit," would, in Mr Elliot's opinion, be superfluous, inasmuch as "they are admirably explained by Lord Macaulay, and are generally understood by educated people of the present

day." He, therefore, prefers to devote a couple of pages to an enquiry which we must describe as perfectly futile, inasmuch as it cannot be said to lead to any assured conclusion, whether the credit of these Acts is due to Godolphin or Montague, or both, or—one may add, as in the case of the Recoinage Bill—to neither. These are, so far as we have perceived, the only references made by Mr Elliot to Godolphin's share in financial legislation; for, of Montague's East India Bill, which Mr Elliot rather sweepingly condemns, Godolphin was an opponent. His biographer ascribes to him, probably with justice, the chief share in the credit of the Methuen Treaty; but this celebrated compact we must take leave to regard as a dexterous stroke of foreign policy rather than as a sound fiscal experiment.

*En revanche*, Mr Elliot insists repeatedly, and in substance we have no doubt correctly, upon the great advantage which accrued to the State from the cautious economy of Godolphin's financial administration. Not only was he personally incorruptible, but he kept as firm a hand as circumstances permitted over the public expenditure, and only under moral compulsion—the compulsion of King William III and that of the Duke of Marlborough, when the great War was at its height—gave way in the direction of extravagance. It was perhaps inevitable that the Lord Treasurer's rule of frugality should be illustrated mainly by the exceptions which he was forced to make to it; but his earnest determination made William III protest "*que je shrink aussi bien que vous*" at the state of the Treasury, and was proof even against his great colleague's recklessness with regard to the public money. Unfortunately, the

King and the Duke alike had their way; but this by no means detracts from the significance of the illustrations. When, however, the question arises whether to this economy and general prudence and orderliness of method should be attributed the extraordinary financial prosperity of the country during the earlier period of the war (for in the later, as Mr Elliot has sufficiently shown, that prosperity was passing away), the answer becomes more than doubtful. The punctuality of Treasury payments and the Treasurer's resistance to sudden or improper calls upon the Exchequer may have had something to do with it, and, also, the disdain of apprehensions like those put forward by Lord Haverham. But we are bound to say that, for anything to the contrary shown in this biography, its readers will be inclined to apply to Godolphin's financial policy Mr Elliot's indisputably true observation concerning his plan of Ministerial government, and to attribute its results to general causes rather than to the statesmanship of any individual.

In discussing Godolphin's influence upon foreign policy during the period of his Lord Treasurership, Mr Elliot seems to be moving upon more familiar ground, though he is not always successful in showing how the influence in question can be directly traced to the source which he ascribes to it. Assuming, however, for the moment that, in spite of Sir Robert Walpole's rather affected protest against being invested by his opponents with the "mock dignity" and "chimerical authority" of a Prime Minister, such a position may be said to have been virtually held by Godolphin, his direction of the foreign policy of the country can



scarcely, on his biographer's own showing, be described as preponderatingly successful. If, with the help of Methuen, he gained Portugal, he failed egregiously with Bavaria; and, indeed, it argues over-sanguineness in him that he should have regarded his project for securing the Elector as at any time "very hopeful." The West India expedition, to the command of which he appointed Peterborough in 1702, was baulked by the inconvenient determination of the Dutch to go shares in so profitable an adventure. The contemporary attack upon Cadiz was something worse than bungled; and the brilliant affair with the Spanish galleons in Vigo Bay, after all, only covered the failure of the scheme to intercept them with the whole of their precious cargo. In the desire which he undoubtedly cherished to give effective support to the insurrection in the Cevennes, the Lord Treasurer was thwarted at first by the apathy of Marlborough, and afterwards by the unaccountable deference of Peterborough to the wishes of "King Charles III" in laying siege to Barcelona. He, likewise, took a warm interest in the negotiations at Turin, where the English Minister, Richard Hill, was his trusted agent and frequent correspondent; and, before the year 1703 was out, he had the satisfaction of seeing Victor Amadeus of Savoy included in the Grand Alliance. Mr Elliot considers—and we incline to agree with him—that a very large share of the responsibility for carrying the War into Spain rests with Godolphin; and his persistent wish to make the Spanish frontier the basis of an attack upon France itself may be regarded as part of the same plan. It failed, partly, as Mr Elliot truly remarks, because



Galway was very far from being a Wellington; but also, whatever may have been Marshal Tessé's impression as to the inclinations of the population of Madrid, because the sentiments of the Spanish people, and of Castile in especial, towards the House of Habsburg at the beginning of the 18th century, were very different from those which animated them towards the House of Bourbon at the beginning of the 19th. As the War went on, Godolphin, in Mr Elliot's opinion, began to be dissatisfied with it and the Alliance, and, at the time of the negotiations in 1709, was ready for peace. With regard to the more general question, one finds some difficulty in concluding Godolphin to have, except in moments of depression, desired peace at the very time when the Government in which he held the foremost place was being converted into a Whig Government. It is true that a month before Malplaquet he told Marlborough that everything would go to ruin unless he brought peace with him. But, no sooner had the battle been fought, than he complacently received a deputation from the Governors of the Bank entreating him not to conclude a peace which should leave Spain to the House of Bourbon. As to the negotiations in the earlier part of the same year, it is, in our opinion, useless for the biographer of Godolphin, as it were, to bandy recriminations with the biographer of Marlborough. A calm consideration of the conduct at this juncture of the person principally concerned—namely, Lewis XIV—suggests the conclusion that the allies, and more especially Great Britain and Austria, behind whose back the negotiations had been opened, had good reason for distrusting him, if not for exacting such

a guarantee as they imposed. For the rest, Mr Elliot explains Godolphin's withholding of his resignation in April 1710, after the Queen had, without consulting him, named Shrewsbury Lord Chamberlain, by his having felt "that if he were withdrawn from the Treasury, the war which Marlborough directed would speedily come to an end for want of supplies."

It will be seen that, in the many difficult and doubtful passages with which the transactions discussed in this volume abound, we are unable uniformly to accept the conclusions of its author. How should it be otherwise, when the argument is so frequently one of probability, and when the biographer by his eager pleading is so apt to provoke an enquiry as to what can be said on the other side? Thus, especially, with his elaborate defence of Godolphin against the charges of hostile intentions against the *de facto* Government to which he was exposed in 1691. But the whole subject of his relations to the exiled House is too complicated a one to be entered into here, and is not of a kind to be summed up in a few sentences. Godolphin's sincerity towards King William in 1691 or in 1696, when he resigned office, although Parliament had declared Fenwick's accusations against him and Marlborough calumnious, can hardly be asserted with more confidence than his sincerity towards the cause of the Protestant Succession in 1708, when he composed for Queen Anne a speech from the throne inveighing against the designs of a Popish pretender. The excess of prudence which Mr Elliot happily describes as his greatest defect made his public life what, in the

language of the pastime which he loved, would be called a perpetual hedging.

There are various other points in this biography which invite comment: as, for instance, the demonstration, very ingeniously put, that Marlborough and Godolphin made a vain attempt, comparable to the more successful effort of the "King's Friends" in a later reign, to govern by a Third Party of their own, without being absorbed in either the Whig or the Tory party. Represented in this way, the failure of the attempt announces itself beforehand, particularly as neither of them was a Parliamentary politician proper, and as there is no sign that Godolphin was personally 'followed' by a single member. We can, by the way, hardly allow that Nottingham's resignation in 1704 is a good example of a politician gravitating towards his natural point of attraction; since he was a politician *sui generis*, who was, afterwards, a member of George I's first Whig Government, and counselled the King to rule with a Whig secular Government and a Tory Church. On the whole, the more usual way of stating the case—namely, that Marlborough, with the aid of Godolphin, sought to unite both parties in support of the War—serves the purpose nearly equally well; and not much is gained by speaking of the 'shedding' and 'accretive' epochs of Godolphin's Ministry. Apart, however, from a certain straining after originality, which such turns of phrase attest, and from occasional passages of retrospective description which trench upon the superfluous, Mr Elliot's book has a freshness which can hardly fail to attract historical students, more especially since, so far as we have observed, this freshness is fortunately com-

bined with a general accuracy of detail. Should the author have occasion to revise his work, we trust that he will enlarge rather than reduce its more substantial part, even where "the most undeniable authority" (Macaulay) may seem to make repetition unnecessary. In return, to the great Whig historian may be left those withering blasts of rhetoric against poor King James II which, even in their author, could occasionally have been spared. They are least welcome from an historical author who, like Mr Hugh Elliot, is so eminently capable of forming and expressing an opinion for himself. King James had unbounded powers of self-deception (though he can hardly have considered it indisputable that "the north *and west* of England were panting for his restoration"), and was hopelessly narrow-minded and ungenerous in many matters besides religion; but it is painful (even for those who are not Jacobites out of season) to find him described by an intelligent and liberal-minded writer as "ready to sell his subjects under the name of religion," and as a Prince "the great object of whose life" was "to persuade men to violate the most sacred trusts."



## 18. MICHAEL'S ENGLISH HISTORY IN THE 18TH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

(*The English Historical Review*, July 1897.)

THIS most substantial volume (against the mere outward or ponderable form of which I hazard a humble protest on behalf of fellow-students) contains the first instalment of what unmistakably promises to be a contribution of high value to an important chapter of British history. Granting the truth of the Duke of Devonshire's recent observation that it still remains most convenient to survey the past of our national history, as the witches invited Macbeth to survey the future of his own, under the aspect of a succession of Kings, we may remember that royal dynasty and national epoch are terms by no means always covering one another. The Hanoverian period proper of our history extends through the reigns of the first two Georges and no further; and it is precisely with regard to these reigns that a comprehensive account of our country's affairs and action in their relation to those of Europe and the world at large has long been a desideratum. We usually resort to the earlier volumes of Lord Stanhope's work (to which his "Reign of Queen Anne" forms a quite inadequate introduction) as to a manual trustworthy not only with regard to its facts, but also as to the spirit of its argument. Yet it would be idle

<sup>1</sup> *Englische Geschichte in achtzehnten Jahrhundert*. Von Wolfgang Michael, a. a. Prof. an der Universität Freiburg i/B. I. Band. Hamburg u. Leipzig, L. Voss: 1896.



to pretend to ignore either the limits to which this author's researches were confined, or a certain general incompleteness of treatment which, in spite of the clear-sightedness and single-mindedness of an untiring devotion to his subject, rarely favoured by having been born and bred in intimacy with some of our finest political traditions, have combined to exclude his chief book from the highest class of historical authorities. Ranke, on the other hand, who alone among German writers, from Schlosser to Noorden, has attempted to write the history of the "eighteenth century" from the standpoint of our national life, devoted little more than a supplementary chapter or two to the reigns of George I and George II, treating them as a period in which the struggle opened by the Revolution of 1688 was carried to its completion, and taking leave of his theme as it expanded, so to speak, unconsciously into a history of two hemispheres.

Notwithstanding certain chinks in his armour, on which it is to the credit of more recent historical criticism that it should have refrained from too eagerly laying a fault-finding finger, Ranke was perhaps one of the few historians in whose case the principle may be fitly waived to which in his preface Professor Michael frankly adverts, viz. that national history is best written by a native. And this certainly not because, as is there said, the foreigner by birth is best qualified to tell the story of a nation's experiences with impartial calm. Rather, that in a historian of Ranke's training and power historic sympathy comes at least very near to taking the place of instinctive national insight and feeling. Professor Michael, whose

volume now before us, like the brief preface prefixed to it, is written with admirable propriety of taste and judgment, prefers no such exceptional claim. (We allow him the usual German "bounce"—*sit venia verbo*—implied in his reference to Shakespeare, whom we puritanised Englishmen can, of course, never be expected to appreciate entirely.) The justification, and the solid value, of his labours, so far as their results are at present before us, admit of a summary statement. His researches concerning the political action of Great Britain in a period when the question of the stability of her national freedom was inextricably interwoven with that of the conduct of her foreign relations have, on the showing of his present volume, been more thorough and complete than those of any predecessor who has been able to put their results into an equally clear and readable form. In addition to the material to be found in the Record Office, he has made admirable use of the diplomatic reports preserved in continental archives—more especially of those of the sorely-tried imperial resident J. P. Hoffmann (for the significance of the epithet, see, for instance, the narrative in this volume of the negotiations of Count Volkra in the early months of 1716), which, for an earlier period, were of so much service to Onno Klopp in the compilation of his, in some ways, invaluable *Fall of the House of Stuart*, and of those, hitherto hardly known to English students, of the Prussian resident F. Bonet. Both these worthies were diplomatic agents of the second rank; but their "relations" do not suffer in value from that fact. The inexhaustible Hanover Archives have likewise stood Professor Michael's narrative in excellent stead.

At the same time, he deserves the credit—more rarely sought in our own than in other epochs of historical composition—of having eschewed any inclination to paradox, or to novelty of conclusion for novelty's sake. Thus, above all, he is careful, at the very outset of his account of the reign of George I, to direct attention to the excessive self-assertion of the German element at the Court of St James's; and expressly prepares his readers for repeated instances of the management of English affairs from the point of view of the electorate pure and simple, frequently to the disadvantage of the kingdom. He argues with perfect correctness that, from almost the very first, the Hanoverian Government contravened the deliberate intention of the Act of Settlement to obviate the imposition of any fetters whatever upon the foreign policy of Great Britain by means of the connexion with Hanover; and the tenour of his narrative, which shows how far from secure—and how much weaker in appearance than in reality—was the hold exercised by the new *régime* over the country, brings home to us the real risk run by George I and his German advisers. Bothmer and Bernstorff, however, in a sense had far more to gain than to lose, while nothing is more certain than that George I would have lost his new kingdom without more emotion than he exhibited on gaining it. Professor Michael, however, although he not only allows but demonstrates that the interests of the German electorate imported a new element into British policy, discriminates very accurately between those instances in which the policy of George I's government was in accordance with well-understood British interests and with the pursuance of a consistent

British "system" of policy, and others in which British resources were made subservient to Hanoverian designs. To the former class belongs what constitutes, on the whole, one of the most notable chapters in the history of European diplomacy, of which the central figure is Stanhope, and of which the crowning achievement was the so-called Quadruple Alliance. By the very circumstances of its conclusion, Great Britain, without whose leadership, rather than mediation, such a conjunction between France and the Emperor would have been out of the question (while she may be almost said to have made it impossible for the United Provinces to hold aloof), was placed in a position such as she cannot be said to have occupied in any other period of her history. Thus the designs of her embittered Spanish foe were defeated before Alberoni had risked his throw. Whatever accelerating influence the Hanoverian purposes of George I may have exercised upon the later negotiations, his Government cannot be said to have for the sake of Hanover entered into those which brought about the French alliance, and thus prepared ulterior developments. On the other hand, Professor Michael's account makes it more plain than ever that the naval operations in the Baltic of 1715 and the following years only in a quite secondary degree benefited British interests, and that the game played by the Hanoverian Ministers for the acquisition of Bremen and Verden was one of extraordinary audacity, which up to 1718 involved this country as well as the reigning dynasty in serious risks. While Parliament and country were made to believe that the instructions of Sir John Norris referred merely to the protection of our Baltic



trade, a distinct promise had been made in Berlin that the British fleet under his command was actively to cooperate on the Pomeranian coast against Sweden; and this promise had been made by a Hanoverian agent who calmly declined to put it in writing, because its performance concerned his master as "King of Great Britain." A third and, as constituting the beginning of our continuous intervention in the Oriental question, very interesting contribution to the history of earlier Georgian diplomacy, to which I can only advert in passing, is furnished by the concluding section of this Volume, where Great Britain appears as the mediating power, on the occasion of the Peace of Passarowitz. This pacification completed the work of the Quadruple Alliance; for, as is here finally shown, Alberoni's last hope had been the continuance of the War between the Emperor and the Turks. It may (although the Emperor desired peace) have helped to arrest the progress of the Austrian arms at the very height of success, and thus to prevent a more definite settlement—for which Europe is still waiting.

If, as may be sincerely hoped, Professor Michael is able to carry on his *History* to the close of the period indicated above—viz., to the end of the reign of George II—and if he displays the same fulness of information and the same precision of treatment in dealing with the policy of Carteret, as he has shown in dealing with that of Bernstorff and Stanhope, his work will commend itself to the appreciation of a large number of readers. I respectfully suggest, that with such an end in view, the author might, for the present at all events, postpone his design of utilising his researches on other aspects



of English history in the reign of our first Hanoverian sovereign. The incomplete success of Mr Lecky's converse attempt to include an adequate account of the successive phases of our foreign policy in a work primarily designed to survey the main agencies in the growth of the enduring characteristics of our national life, may serve to show how desirable it is even for a writer of singularly comprehensive powers to place limits upon their exercise. I say this without, in Professor Michael's case, pretending to anticipate results. In the introductory sketch, which fills about a quarter of the bulky volume under review, he has proved himself very distinctly capable of summarising with lucidity the chief features of our national progress. Without attempting brilliancy or picturesqueness, of which, perhaps, we have had enough for the present generation's delight, he has produced a singularly useful and readable outline to be added to other treatments of the same subject. I can say for myself that I have read through these pages without effort, and I trust not without profit; but life is short, and Professor Michael must pardon the hint that, in an English translation, a Tacitean chapter or two would serve all practical purposes up to the commencement of his Introduction proper, which I take to be the "Foundation of Parliamentary Monarchy." As he progresses towards the close of the reign of Queen Anne, his narrative begins to exhibit manifest traces of independent enquiry. Attention should be directed to his acute observations on such points as the commencement of direct peace negotiations with France by the Tories—a fact of which the Whigs, in their subsequent impeachment of the authors of the Peace, proved themselves to have

remained in ignorance; and, again, to his very telling criticism of the shortcomings of the Peace itself in securing those very commercial advantages that were intended to prove its fundamental justification. His account of the preparations for the Hanoverian Succession is remarkably clear, and I am prepared to allow that he is well warranted in leaving aside, as really of little importance, much detail as to the action or inaction in this respect of the electoral family. As to the intentions of the leading Ministers of the "Last Four Years," his conclusions are not very different from those of another recent writer, Dr A. Salomon, which were noticed in this *Review* not long since; but I cannot recall any more plausible attempt than Professor Michael's to exhibit the nature of Bolingbroke's conception of the situation and its requirements. In a word, if this conception had proved correct, the accession of the House of Hanover might have been a mere incident predestined to a speedy collapse. But I cannot think the explanation of Bolingbroke's action at this stage altogether convincing. In what may be called the body of the narrative, which contains some admirable appreciations of political personages to whose significance English historians have been apt to pay too little attention—the Hanoverian Ministers and their agents in particular—its chief value must, however, be sought. In addition to those later phases of policy of which mention has already been made, attention should be directed to what is here said of the designs for a renewal of the War against France which occupied Stanhope and his colleagues in the months preceding the death of Lewis XIV.

This volume contains no more interesting chapter

than that which describes the negotiations which resulted in the conclusion, through English mediation, of the Barrier Treaty of 1715, an achievement of the utmost importance in view of the actual necessities of British policy, but futile in its results for the interests of either of the contracting powers. The more important of these—Austria—entered with open eyes into a false position, from which, to her own cost and to that of the Peace of Europe, her proverbial good fortune was not to enable her to escape in time.

(1920) The new volume of Professor Michael's most valuable work, which appeared in the year after the War, contains in its Preface a kindly message to English friends—one of the earliest signs of the feeling of goodwill between German and English scholars destined, we firmly believe, to survive the conflict between the nations.

## 19. KÖCHER'S HISTORY OF HANOVER AND BRUNSWICK<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, October 24, 1885.)

To English readers the history of the House of Hanover and of the ancient princely line of which it forms a branch has naturally enough only become known in fragments and snatches. When King George I, postponing private inclination to the dictates of what may fairly be called public spirit, ascended the British throne, the fortunes of his dynasty, as a matter of course, became associated with those of the nation over which he was called to rule, and which has long been wont to claim as public property even the private history of its Princes and Princesses. Not a little, we may remark in passing, remains to be done before the part played in public policy by our first Hanoverian Kings, and by George I in especial, shall have been made perfectly clear; but it is, assuredly, a more competent treatment of the existing materials rather than an accumulation of new of which we stand in need. At the same time, we cannot profess to hold the opinion that the significance of our later Sovereigns' personal characters and actions has, as a rule, been overrated, although, owing chiefly to the rose-water or the gall of Court historians of different types, it may have been frequently misjudged. Concerning the history of the House before

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte von Hannover und Braunschweig, 1648 bis 1714.* Von Adolf Köcher. I. Theil (1648-1668). (Publicationen aus den K. Preussischen Staatsarchiven.) Leipzig. 1884.



its political connexion with Great Britain began, a certain amount of gossip about the Electress Sophia and scandal about her son apart, not much was known in England for many a day after that connexion had been established. To Horace Walpole, writing as late as 1772 on the subject of the hated Royal Marriage Bill, the Royal House was in its origin "a little family from Germany." It is true that, not long after the Duchess of Gloucester's uncle indulged in this polite sneer, the greatest historian of his age committed to paper the opinion that "an English subject may be prompted, by a just and liberal curiosity, to investigate the origin and story of the House of Brunswick, which, after an alliance with the daughter of our kings, has been called by the voice of a free people to the legal inheritance of the crown." But Gibbon's essay on the *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*, unfortunately, remained uncompleted. In it he had, indirectly, the advantage of the researches of Leibniz, who gave up to the service of the name and fame of the Hanoverian House so large a share (though not as large a one as George I demanded) of his own inexhaustible mental activity. Neither, however, had Leibniz in his day accomplished the task which he had undertaken, and after his death his MSS. fell into hands that seem to have been rash and not altogether competent. It was some time before the voluminous *Origines Guelficæ*, founded in the first instance upon Leibniz's researches, made their appearance. Gibbon's predilection for Italy attracted him more especially to the enquiries into the history of the House of Este by which Muratori had supplemented the labours of Leibniz, and the history of



the House of Brunswick was not carried by him beyond the founder of its first but transitory greatness, Henry the Lion.

That little attention should have been paid in this country to the history of the German Guelfs during the five centuries which ensued upon Henry the Lion's downfall is explicable enough. In substance, it is the history of a line with a great past behind it; but, the early years of the 13th and the latter part of the 17th century being excepted, without even the shadow of a great future before it. Otto IV's splendid but dangerous game was not played over again by his cautious nephew, Otto the Child, whom our King Henry III would gladly have seen an avowed rival of the hated Hohenstaufen. He resolved to build up the shattered fortunes of his line prudently, and under the sunshine of the Imperial favour, and the descendants, among whom his inheritance was partitioned and repartitioned times without number, had not the power, even if they had had the will, to adopt a less cautious policy. Impotent against their very Estates, they only sustained themselves by means of escheats, which, in their turn, went the usual way of subtraction or division. The family history, however, of the Old, Middle, and New Brunswick and Lüneburg lines cannot here be so much as glanced at; though it may be pointed out how the Reformation period passed by without having secured to the House of Guelf, enriched though it had been by secularisations, such a position in Germany as a systematic cooperation between its branches could hardly have failed to ensure to it. Again, in the Thirty Years' War, a combination between

the two main branches of the House might have constituted it the bulwark of the Protestant cause in the north-west, and made it able to withstand the armies of the League and of the Emperor. Instead, these forces nearly appropriated Hanover to Tilly as an hereditary residence, and in the end reduced these regions of Germany to a condition almost as wretched as that of the Palatinate. But, while in the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel line timorousness took the place of a loyal conservatism, George of Lüneburg steered the pliant vessel of his policy safely through the Scylla of diplomatic difficulties and the Charybdis of war. Inconsistent, with that kind of inconsistency which changes its means but not its end, George of Lüneburg succeeded in preserving the inheritance of his sons, the youngest of whom was the founder of the House of Hanover. Already under his elder brother, about the middle of the Great War the New Lüneburg (ultimately the Hanoverian) Line had definitively assured its preponderance over that of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel.

The history of the two divisions of the House of Brunswick, whose territories, partitioned in 1265, have never since been reunited, and are unlikely to be blended in our own day, unless the duchy of Brunswick should be actually incorporated in the Prussian province of Hanover<sup>1</sup>, has, of course, been written even in its most complicated portions by native historians. The Göttingen Professor Spittler, in 1786, published a brief history of the principality of Calenberg (Hanover), which, through the good fortune and sagacity of Ernest Augustus, had become the nucleus of

<sup>1</sup> [This was never done.]

a power sufficient to warrant the bestowal of the electoral dignity upon him. It is an admirable book, written with a freshness and absence of pedantry quite extraordinary when the nature of its subject is considered; but it is comparatively slight both in its own dimensions and in those of its theme, and closes with the death of Ernest Augustus himself. The late Professor Havemann's *History of Brunswick-Lüneburg*, on the other hand, aims at a complete history of the entire dynasty and of its territories; but, though a very trustworthy performance, like everything known to us from the hand of its author, it has few of the qualities which will ensure to Spittler's much briefer work a longer life than the mere amount of information contained in it might seem to warrant. The Hanover Archives were not open to Havemann in the sense in which they are to the historians of our own day, and, unless we mistake, his interest centred in Brunswick. The selection of papers published by the late Mr J. M. Kemble was of a miscellaneous description; and, with the exception of M. Onno Klopp, to whom the Archives are now closed, and who is, in any case, a declared partisan, no recent writer has sought to digest the materials at hand for a political history of greater pretensions. Dr Adolf Köcher was, therefore, well judged in undertaking a History of Hanover and Brunswick during the period between the Peace of Westphalia and the accession of George I to the British throne. No previous historian had narrated with adequate fulness the history of the Wolfenbüttel and Lüneburg lines during these sixty-six years, in the course of which their policy once more became a

matter of European significance, or the history of that policy itself, which they now once more began to conduct on common principles or, at least, in accordance with a joint understanding. No time could have been more propitious for filling up the gap than the present, when, under a remarkably able and (at least towards Ghibellines) genuinely Liberal administration, the Hanoverian Archives are rapidly yielding up their treasures, and when the political extinction of the Hanoverian dynasty has anything but depressed the ardour for research among the historians of Lower Saxony. Finally, the work has been taken in hand by a historian preeminently well suited to it. Both in his edition of the *Memoirs of the Electress Sophia* and elsewhere, Dr Köcher has showed himself to be possessed of an acumen as indispensable for the interpretation of his materials as his industry must have been for their collection. He is, moreover, as his recent essay on Lampadius reminds us, not less alive to the significance of the political ideas than he is skilful in unravelling the political action of his period; and his exposition, though here and there almost inevitably dry, is throughout the reverse of barren. The ground which he traverses will in part be new even to those who are familiar with Droysen's, unhappily unfinished, *History of Prussian Policy*. But, even where such is not the case, he has contrived to keep himself free from that last (or last-but-one) infirmity of the scientific mind—the tendency towards differing in order to differ. On the whole, the volume before us supports the view which, correct as we hold it to be, is not easily proved without elaborate



argument, that the Great Elector has as a politician not been overpraised even by Prussian historiography.

Out of the troubles of the Thirty Years' War the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg had no doubt saved something besides its honour; but its political power and authority in Germany seemed to have sunk to their nadir. Of all the ecclesiastical spoils of the Reformation days, it had secured nothing beyond a solitary abbey and that odd right of alternate appointment to the see of Osnabrück, failing which Ernest Augustus, the progenitor of our Hanoverian Kings, would at one time have been devoid even of an "expectation." (The inheritance of the so-called "New Lüneburg" Line had come to be divided into two main parts, Lüneburg-Celle and Calenberg (Hanover); and the youngest son of Duke George, Ernest Augustus, was the youngest of the four brothers who had claims on these lands.) It is true that both Brunswick-Lüneburg and Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, having learnt wisdom from experience and followed the patriotic counsels given by Duke George in 1636, were now on the best of terms with one another; but their military strength had been reduced to the lowest point, and there was no money for paying more men. And this, while on the one side Sweden had been "satisfied" with Bremen and Verden, and on the other Brandenburg had been consoled with Magdeburg, Minden, and Halberstadt. It was, however, self-preservation, not self-aggrandisement, which the Brunswick-Lüneburg Dukes had at heart when, with a view primarily to the claims upon Hanover of Duke Charles IV of Lorraine, who, following in the wake of Spain, refused to acknowledge



the Peace, they entertained a project of surrounding their territories with an alliance based on the principle of the Lower Saxon Circle. The times were such that to construct a nest was easier than to settle who should take shelter and lay eggs in it; and the Hildesheim League, which on its formation early in 1652 included, besides the Brunswick-Lüneburg Dukes, the Swedish duchies of Bremen and Verden, together with Hesse-Cassel, might come to mean very much more or very much less than was intended at Celle and at Wolfenbüttel. But, for the Brunswick-Lüneburg Dukes, it was the first lever towards the establishment of their influence in the north-west. It enabled them, in the first instance, to take a leading part in the conflicts which the Peace of Westphalia had left over, or which it had actually intensified. As a matter of course, these conflicts found expression at the Diet held at Ratisbon towards the close of the same year 1652. Dr Köcher's account of them will be found full of instruction even for the student of the history of the Empire and of European politics at large. The great Peace had put an end neither to the ambition of the House of Austria nor to the intrigues of France; while, within the Empire, the Estates were resolved to make the most of their rights old and new, and among the Princes a deep-seated jealousy prevailed against the claims maintained by the College of Electors. Added to this, there were the apprehensions, by no means unwarranted, of the Protestants that the Catholics would contrive to set at naught some of the religious securities which had been conceded to the former. There seems, even thus early, to have been some thought of modifying the

Electoral College by the creation of a ninth—a Protestant—electorate, though Dr Köcher finds no trace of the ambition of the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg having already at this time tended to such an issue. In general, however, the Brunswick-Lüneburg Dukes at Ratisbon played a leading part among the Protestant Princes; and after the dissolution of the Diet, an understanding, full of solid promise for the future of Protestant Germany, was effected between them and Brandenburg. This was largely due to the efforts of Count Waldeck, a statesman of whose energy and ability, and of whose commanding influence upon European politics during the latter half of the 17th century, the volume before us furnishes fresh proof. But the immediate cause of this understanding was the arbitrary conduct of Sweden, eager to absorb the Imperial city of Bremen as an integral part of her unnaturally swollen monarchy.

It would be futile to expect much heroism in the policy of petty principalities, primarily intent upon obeying the "eldest law" of all policy—namely, that of self-preservation. The Brunswick-Lüneburgers were resolved, in the diplomatic jargon of the day, to restrict the alliance with Brandenburg *ad terminos defensivos*—i.e. to cooperate in nothing that was not for their own immediate interest. Accordingly, more especially in view of the war between Poland and Sweden, the alliance between Brandenburg and Brunswick-Lüneburg, and the wider north-German Protestant alliance into which Waldeck had hoped it would expand, fell to the ground. The Brunswick-Lüneburgers, instead of following the Great Elector of

Brandenburg in the bold change of policy which ranged him among the enemies of Sweden and her ambitious King, sought refuge in that League of ill-omened name which before long was joined by the two foreign Powers most directly dangerous to German independence, the first Confederation of the Rhine (1658). Dr Köcher's account of the origin and progress of this Confederation forms one of the most interesting portions of this volume, but cannot be analysed here. Though the Brunswick-Lüneburgers were not awake to the danger incurred by the German members of the *Rheinbund* through their alliance with France and Sweden, it is clear that the purpose of the ducal Governments was in itself innocent enough, and extended no further than the safeguarding of the neutrality of their territories. They were too cautious, and felt themselves too weak, to be *gut reichisch*, like the Great Elector.

When, in course of time (1664), the dangers involved in the French protectorate for the independence and security of the Protestant Estates became evident even to purblind eyes, the Brunswick-Lüneburg Dukes would gladly have fallen back upon the scheme of a separate Protestant league. But, unfortunately, it was just about this period that their unity among themselves, on which their importance in the Empire had depended, was broken up by an untoward series of internal conflicts. These are detailed by Dr Köcher in his Fourth Book, which, being full of matters personal, and including one or two decidedly strange episodes, may prove to many readers the most attractive portion of this volume. But there is little in the narra-

tive that will be altogether new to the readers of the *Memoirs of the Electress Sophia*, and the whole story is as full of complications as it is of curiosities. Its central figure, at this stage, is the third of the sons of Duke George of Lüneburg, John Frederick, from 1665 to 1679 ruler of Calenberg (Hanover). Though physically cast in a mould not usually characteristic of men of action—he was by far the most corpulent of a corpulent race, “horribly fat,” in the words of his plain-spoken sister-in-law Sophia—he surpassed his three brothers in intellectual ability and in loftiness of spirit. A convert to the Church of Rome, he went his own way in matters political as well as religious, without, however, as Dr Köcher is at pains to show, either seeking to enforce his faith by persecution, or overlooking the common interests of his House during the pursuit of his personal interests. On the pretext of an ambiguity in their father’s will, he attempted, after the death of his eldest brother, to secure for himself—now the second surviving brother—a share of the inheritance of his line which should be, in the strict sense of the term, a moiety. And he, substantially, succeeded in his attempt, although the method which he adopted, that of seizing the larger share by a *coup d’état*, had nearly provoked intestine war. The difficulty which in the existing state of Northern Germany, with Sweden ready to intervene, and the favour of France wooed by both parties, and the Bishop of Münster already disturbing public tranquillity, was solved by the active and direct diplomacy of Count Waldeck. John Frederick acknowledged his elder brother George William’s absolute right to the originally larger share, Lüneburg-Celle; but



his own, Calenberg-Göttingen, was increased by the addition of Grubenhagen and its mines, so familiar to students of the biography of Leibniz. As is well known, a strange sequence of events united both inheritances in the hands of the son of the fourth brother, Ernest Augustus—afterwards King George I.

These domestic dissensions were settled in time for the reunited House to acquire, once more, a certain importance in connexion with the general course of European politics. In 1665 the Dukes entered into a subsidy-treaty with the States-General, and Ernest Augustus even had the honour of being the nominal Commander-in-chief in the war provoked by the Bishop of Münster. This combination, which once more enabled the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg to place a considerable army in the field, soon expanded into the Quadruple Alliance (1666), of which Brandenburg and Denmark were the remaining members. Under this new constellation, Bremen was saved from the designs of Sweden, and the real impotence of the latter Power was demonstrated; while, at the same time, the Confederation of the Rhine began to collapse. It is true that the proceedings of Brandenburg, and afterwards those of the House of Austria itself, destroyed the hopes founded by Dutch policy upon a league which bitterly exasperated France. Everybody knows how much greater was the temporary success of the second endeavour in the same direction, the famous Triple Alliance of 1668. The House of Brunswick-Lüneburg, which had shown sagacity and spirit in resisting alike the threats and the seductions of France in 1667, had, by the collapse of the Quadruple Alliance,



been once more driven—and by no fault of its own—to take up an attitude of reserve. At the close of the period treated in this volume, we leave the Lüneburg and the Wolfenbüttel branches agreed on suspending the adoption of a decisive policy under the new aspect of affairs brought about by the Triple Alliance, and we leave them in the meantime objects of much courteous solicitude both to the members of that alliance and to Lewis XIV himself. The position in which they found themselves—a very different position from that in which they had stood at the close of the Thirty Years' War—was due in no small measure to the circumspectness of their policy, but in a far higher degree to the union in which they had found strength, and most of all to their standing army. The Dutch guilders which it earned for them went for something; and so, perhaps, did the laurels which under the Venetian flag their troops gained in Crete. But it effected more for them than this, for it made them Princes who might hold their heads high in the Empire, and who could not altogether be left out of the reckoning in the next great European conflict.

In conclusion, we may add that the appendices to this volume, and more especially the despatches from the Hague of the Celle Councillor of Legation, Müller, are not likely to be neglected by the historical student. The private correspondences of the Duchesses Anna Eleonora and Sophia, which follow, should not be overlooked by any reader.

## 20. THE GREAT ELECTOR

(*The English Historical Review*, April 1898, January 1903,  
January 1905.)

THE most recent production of Dr Philippson's versatile pen<sup>1</sup> is unlikely to expose him to so many angry cavils as were provoked by his account of the decay of the monarchy of Frederick the Great in the nerveless hands of his successor. This time it is the foundations of the Prussian monarchy which he has essayed to trace: an undertaking by no means devoid of difficulty, but sure of the sympathies of criticism at home. Dr Philippson, among whose shortcomings as an historian want of frankness has never found a place, makes no pretence of interpreting the political action of the Great Elector as having been mainly carried on from the point of view of German national patriotism. But he is successful in showing, without resort to exaggeration or paradox, that considerations of this description were not foreign to Frederick William's mind; and the conjecture seems on the whole safe that "his German heart felt most at ease when the advantage of his own state coincided with the interests of the wider Fatherland." At all events, he was alive to the uses to which it was possible to put such remains of the national sentiment in question as lingered among the people at large. In 1658, at the critical moment of the self-willed rupture by Charles X of the peace of the North, which, a few

<sup>1</sup> Philippson, Martin, *Der Grosse Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*. 3 vols. (Berlin, S. Cronbach, 1897-1903.)

months earlier, had seemed to be at last secured at Roeskilde, the Elector caused a pamphlet to be put forth under the direction of Schwerin, one of the worthiest though not perhaps one of the ablest of his Ministers, in the form of an appeal to an imaginary "honest German," likely to be filled with indignation by the thought that Rhine, Weser, Elbe, and Oder were no longer aught but the captives of foreign nations. The opportuneness of this address was shown by its running through seven German editions, as well as being translated into French and English. We may not be very profoundly impressed by the generalisation which Dr Philippon seeks to establish on so early an occasion as the young Elector's rejection, at the time of the Westphalian Peace negotiations, of the overtures for a French alliance. But we feel bound to concede the cogency of the argument that without the strong arm and equally strong will which Frederick William was the first of the Hohenzollerns to bring to bear upon the complications of European affairs, Ducal Prussia would have become a prey to one of the contending powers—Poland or Sweden, or perhaps Russia. Not only must such a result have involved the loss to Germany of one more of the Baltic lands colonised and Christianised by her efforts, but the foundations would have been removed on which the future Prussian monarchy was to rise into being and its later services to the reunion of the German nation were to be rendered possible. This achievement on the part of the Great Elector is the more remarkable, when we take into account the aversion to his rule entertained by the Estates and inhabitants of the duchy. He was unaccept-

able to them, not only on account of the never-ending sacrifices entailed by his wars with Poles and Swedes, but *a priori* by reason of his profession of the Calvinistic form of faith. It was an irony of fate that Frederick William should have to suffer from this prejudice, when in truth, though deeply religious in feeling, he was himself strongly opposed to all narrow confessionalism. I may take this opportunity of observing that the Elector's biographer satisfactorily corrects the notion that his consort, Louisa Henrietta of Orange, was merely a "beautiful soul" of restricted sympathies.

Dr Philippon, who has judged well in concluding the time to have come for a modern monograph on the life and work of the Great Elector, although the publication of the documentary materials is still in progress, and has been completed only with regard to certain very limited aspects of the subject, hopes to bring his present work to a close in a second volume. But it is obvious that for this sequel there remains over the most interesting, if not the most difficult, part of his theme. The first volume carries the story no further than the Peace of Oliva in 1660, and the concluding summary of the Elector's system of government, and of the relations to it of himself and of other leading personalities, moves more or less within the same limits. This cannot be pronounced an altogether convenient arrangement, inasmuch as, both of his religious and of his colonial policy, for instance, some of the most notable developments belong to the latter part of his reign. I may observe in passing that among the leading personalities in question, Waldeck is in this volume made to suffer for the perhaps unduly exalted estimate



of his statesmanship which has been elsewhere elaborated, but of which, in view of his ultimate abandonment of the Brandenburg for the Swedish service, a repetition was of course not to be looked for here. The singularly complex political activity of this cosmopolitan statesman is a theme which could not be fitly treated in passing; but it may, perhaps, be worth while to note that, on Dr Philippson's own showing, to Waldeck was due the idea of constituting the attainment of the sovereignty over Ducal Prussia the main purpose of Brandenburg's action in connexion with the Swedo-Polish war.

At the close of the struggle, as Dr Philippson points out in the most important passage of this volume (where he judiciously balances the disappointments and the compensations contained in the settlement of the Peace of Oliva), Brandenburg was left isolated, and the arrogance of Sweden unchastised, though not wholly unchecked; but the Duke of Prussia was no longer the vassal of a foreign Crown, and his policy no longer needed to subserve any interests save his own. The sagacity and resolution by means of which Frederick William had achieved this preliminary result are exhibited without prolixity, but with sufficient distinctness, in the present volume. We see Frederick William in the first decade of his reign, in face of difficulties enhanced by allurements from beyond the Rhine, securing to Brandenburg, in the Peace of Westphalia, conditions more favourable than he could have expected, or than seem altogether compatible with the essential weakness of his position. Yet, strangely enough, he was thoroughly dissatisfied with the result; for his heart was



set on his birthright—i.e. on the whole of Pomerania—and, so late as January 1649, he would have given up to the Swedes Magdeburg, Halberstadt and Minden, if they would have made over to him Anterior Pomerania and its seaboard. In the vigour with which, though to no immediate purpose, he asserted himself in the Rhenish duchies, both before and after the Peace of Westphalia, we recognise the same determined spirit, maintained in the face of a jealous Imperial authority and unconcealed Dutch indifference or ill-will. But the most prolonged and exacting test of Frederick William's capabilities as a politician, so far as the earlier half of his reign is concerned, is of course to be sought in his management of his affairs throughout the Polish and Danish Wars stirred up by the ambition of Charles X of Sweden. Dr Philippon's sketch of the designs, more extraordinary even than the deeds, of this great warrior king—hardly inferior in the audacity of his genius to his predecessor Gustavus, or to his successor and namesake—is clear and forcible, and attention may be directed to the illustrations which it furnishes of the connexion between these designs and the aggressive policy of the Governments of Oliver and Richard Cromwell. Frederick William's policy in these Wars followed the dictates of an intelligent self-interest which shrank from no tergiversation or breach of faith; and his desertion of Sweden in the Treaty of Wehlau can hardly find an excuse in the suggestion of his present biographer that he had not quite made up his mind whether to carry it out. Compared with this extraordinary instance of political "cynicism," his admirable diplomacy on the occasion of the Imperial

election of 1658 sinks into insignificance, though it succeeded in playing off France against Austria, and bringing about a capitulation entirely to the advantage of the Elector's particular interests. With regard to the general character of his political dealings, we may, or may not, accept Dr Philipppson's candid concession that "the standard of ordinary morality is not to be applied to his conduct"; but he is certainly not far from the mark in observing that "without a price Frederick William sacrificed himself for nobody."

I have not adverted to the record of Frederick William's earlier achievements in war, to be found in this volume, as well as in Pufendorf and other earlier authorities; but I need hardly say that Dr Philipppson makes no attempt to connect them with the modern popular development of the Prussian military system. While he shows how thorough was the change effected by the son of the unlucky George William in the condition of the forces commanded by him as Imperial "Generalissimus," and how the Brandenburg army which mustered in 1655, and gained its first laurels in the following year in the three days' battle of Warsaw, was in truth the Prussian army in germ, he leaves his readers in no doubt as to the elements of which it was composed and the management which it required. Perhaps, however, it was, after all, not essentially different in composition from the soldiery which conquered and held that Silesia which, already a century earlier, Mazarin had dangled before the eyes of the youthful elector Frederick William. A feature of his administrative system which seems more modern is the consideration shown by him for the lowest class

of his subjects in the matter of the incidence of taxation. This was a by no means solitary instance of his superiority to the society by which he was surrounded, and with which, intelligent and resolute as he was, he had to content himself with establishing a sort of administrative compromise. The recess of the Diet of 1653 is termed by Dr Philippon the "Magna Carta" of the Brandenburg nobility, but a "Magna Carta" of servitude for the rest of the population. In return, the Elector secured the maintenance of a standing army and a lasting system of pecuniary contributions; and these, as his biographer says, were to become the true bases of his power and of that of his State.

THE second volume of Professor Philippon's *Life of the Great Elector* reaches the very heart of his subject. To say, however, that the distinguished author seems to treat it with perfect satisfaction to himself would be to ignore his sensitiveness on behalf of a great reputation which is quite compatible with a desire to tell the whole truth. We may leave out of account the superscriptions of the two Books into which the present volume is divided, since it must in candour be confessed that no period of Frederick William's political activity admits very easily of being summarised in such monumental phraseology as that here adopted. "Brandenburg as defender of" Germanism, or of whatever else may be the correct translation of *deutsches Wesen*, must be made to include the so-called Treaty of Berlin of December 1667, by which, in return for a promise, at the most of temporary value, as to his attitude towards the Polish Succession, Lewis XIV

secured the neutrality of Brandenburg in the War of Devolution. Yet, as his confidential communication to Waldeck a few months earlier shows, Frederick William had been prompt to perceive the danger of the designs of France. "The Heroic Era" (*die Heldenzeit*) has to extend back from the splendid march from Main to Havel, the brilliant though incomplete victory of Fehrbellin, the conquest of Pomerania, and the equally memorable expulsion of the Swedish invaders from East Prussia in midwinter (January and February 1679) to the inglorious proceedings of 1672 and 1674, the humiliating compacts of St Germain's and Vossem, and the retreat on the Rhine after the lost battle of Türkheim.

But, in his narrative of the successive events and transactions which make up the changeful history of this, the most important, part of the Great Elector's career Professor Philippson's determination to do honour to the force of facts makes him a trustworthy guide. Here and there, to be sure, he seems rather inclined to overestimate the political importance of the central figure of his story. The Elector of Brandenburg's Court at Cleves in 1657 and 1658 is described as the centre of European politics, and, in his, to say the least very intermittent, efforts to bring about a combination against the predominance of France, he is represented as a kind of earlier William of Orange. But none of his shiftings and tackings are suppressed, if some are in a fashion extenuated, by his biographer; and, while he insists upon the service which Frederick William's action in 1672—however incomplete in itself—rendered to the United Provinces, he unhesitatingly condemns the cardinal error of the Great



Elector's policy in refusing, when he had earned that title by his military successes in 1678, to furnish effective assistance to the United Provinces in return for their subsidies. The Dutch, says his biographer, would not so utterly have sacrificed his interests at Nymegen had he not thus relieved them of the slightest obligation towards him. His calculation on the goodwill of France proved as futile as it was baseless. Lewis XIV refused to lift a finger in favour of the cession of Pomerania by the ally to whom he held himself bound in honour, and whose losses had in truth been incurred on his account. With regard to the earlier years treated of in this volume, the author's explanation of Frederick William's almost unparalleled changeableness may be accepted as the correct one. The greatness of his designs outran the measure of his pecuniary, and hence of his military, resources. Indeed, early in 1674 he unequivocally stated to his privy councillors that, without subsidies, he would be ruined; and this, it is quite obvious, was a chief reason for his, at this time, again inclining to a Dutch alliance. But when, at the head of the army which he had preserved through two campaigns, he had at last vindicated his claim to count for something in the counsels of Europe, the time had surely come for him to give the lie to the contemptuous judgment of Lisola: "From the Elector of Brandenburg I neither expect anything good nor fear anything evil, since I know that his mind is set upon nothing except fishing in troubled waters."

The relations of Frederick William to the House of Habsburg and its counsellors would require a closer examination than can be attempted on the present



occasion. In the opinion of Professor Philipppson (who renders full justice to the sincerity of Lisola's negotiations in 1663 for an intimate alliance, soon deprived of its primary purpose by the Turkish Peace of the following year), the animus prevailing at Vienna against the young Protestant Power vitiated these relations from first to last; it may be well to add that they were throughout uncomfortably pervaded by the Jägerndorf claim. It is quite true that, speaking comparatively, Frederick William entertained sentiments of loyalty towards the Imperial house, partly accounted for by his remembrance of the relations between it and Brandenburg in his father's time; and there is an undeniable contrast between his policy in this respect and that, say, of Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that, as has been conclusively shown by M. Doeberl in his recent valuable work on Bavarian and Austrian relations, more especially during the rule of the Elector just mentioned, the policy of Bavaria, which it is so easy to set down as treacherous and "weak," was, at least primarily, due to motives of self-preservation rather than of self-aggrandisement. Professor Philipppson treats the secret Partition Treaty between Leopold I and Lewis XIV of January 1668 as partly intended to secure the alliance of France against the "heretical Triple Alliance"; and he connects this compact directly with the agreement between the same Powers in November 1671, that seemed to complete the isolation of the United Provinces in face of the terrible danger then already well known to be threatening them from France. The resolution of Frederick William to enter into the negotiations for a

separate Peace with France, which ended with the compacts of 1673—the *nadir* of his intervention in European politics—is, partly at least, explained by the expressions of dislike called forth at Vienna in the previous year by his forward action. Yet it cannot be denied that the Emperor proved staunch, after the Elector had given way. Finally, the unlucky ending of the Alsatian campaign of 1674 is in this volume considered to be explicable by something besides the incompetence of the Imperial Commander-in-chief, Bournonville, or his personal jealousy against the Brandenburg Elector and his troops—in other words, by instructions from Vienna; but the evidence produced on this head seems hardly clear or convincing.

The chapters in this volume which deal with Polish affairs are of great interest, and supply a very important clue to much of Frederick William's action. Though his foreign policy and its consequences form the main subject of the present section of Professor Philippson's valuable work, he has found room for an interesting chapter on the Elector's dealings with the civic liberties of Magdeburg, which were effectively repressed by him. They were of the type of those which he allowed to be taken away in the case of Erfurt, but which he prevented the Swedes from crushing in the case of Bremen. Two further sections deal with his conflicts with the Estates of Prussia and of Brandenburg respectively. In both instances, this strong-willed Prince, who, as is shown by his proceedings against the Kalcksteins, Roths, and Strauchs, shrank from nothing in the pursuance of his monarchical ends, completely asserted himself as master. The struggle in Prussia was complicated by

religious intolerance on the part of his adversaries; but the real contention in both Duchy and Mark was that of an absolutism prepared to hold sway for the advantage of the State against interests accustomed to subordinate it to their own. At the right moment, his military prowess taught the East Prussians to fear his strength more than their Western neighbours loved the weakness of their Polish suzerain; while, in Brandenburg, he, in the crucial matter of the excise, skilfully pitted the interests of the towns against those of the open country.

PROFESSOR PHILIPPSON is to be congratulated on the completion of a task of uncommon difficulty. Beyond a doubt, Frederick William's achievements, as well as the energy which made them possible, entitle him to the distinctive designation accorded to him in history. It was he who laid the foundations of the greatness of the Brandenburg-Prussian State; and he was the earliest of the rulers of that State under whom it had to be taken into account in the counsels of Europe. This result was due, in the first instance, to the fact that Brandenburg-Prussia owed the real beginnings of its army, and of this army's fame, to his sleepless ambition, to his determination to be master of his whole military force, to levy every regiment of it, and to enforce discipline among both officers and soldiers. It is not less certain that the essential characteristics of the general administrative system of the Prussian State, although its organisation was more fully developed under Frederick William I, and tried in the fire under his great son, were impressed upon every part of

it by the Great Elector, and that, in the words of his latest and most adequate biographer, "the fact and the consciousness of the unity of the State were his creations." This he brought about through a systematic substitution of central for provincial authority, and by the establishment, throughout his dominions, of a body of officials, the choice of whom was unrestricted by any respect for provincial privileges, and who included Germans from other States and Protestant foreigners. He deprived his nobility of political power, while increasing their advantages as landlords; he imposed a graduated income-tax upon all classes of his subjects; he subjected all payments devoted to the support of the army to the central control of an officer who was to all intents and purposes a Minister of War. An admirable illustration of Frederick William's administrative methods will be found in the account here given of his transformation of the Government of the see of Magdeburg, which fell to him by the death of its last Administrator in 1680. But, more than this, the far-sighted activity of his mind reached forward into times when under Prussian headship Germany was not to rest content with a leading position as one of the great states of Europe, but was to claim permanent admission among the naval and colonial Powers of the world. Professor Philippon's chapter on the naval and colonial affairs of the Great Elector's reign will be read with peculiar interest, apart from the sidelights which it throws on the relations of his government with the United Provinces and on the significance of his "liberation" of the German territory of East Friesland. The "battle of St Vincent," which is here described as "the



greatest sea-fight waged by the Brandenburg-Prussian navy down to the present day," has a moral resemblance, at all events, to the exploits of Drake and Hawkins; but the story of the African Company, which was to have had its permanent seat at Emden, though nothing but a military occupation was in reality effected, seems to come home to us more closely.

Finally—and herein lies his surest claim to the ungrudging recognition of posterity—the Great Elector rendered services to the cause of Toleration into which, as into all the acts of a great politician, an element of self-interest may have entered, but which stood out conspicuously in an age which was once more overshadowed by the dark cloud of persecution. To his seemingly omnipotent ally's revocation of the Edict of Nantes he unhesitatingly replied by the Edict of Potsdam (<sup>Oct. 29</sup><sub>Nov. 8</sub> 1685), which, "from a just compassion for those who are suffering misfortune for the Gospel," opened to them a series of places of refuge in the Brandenburg lands, where, for fixed periods of years, they would enjoy freedom from the several kinds of taxation and from other burdens. The remonstrances made against this proclamation by Lewis XIV's Minister of Foreign affairs, Colbert de Croissy, were met by Frederick William's representative, Ezechiel Spanheim (a most capable diplomatist as well as a very learned man, and trained in the liberal ideas of the Court of the Elector Palatine Charles Lewis), with platitudes which just sufficiently covered his master's determination to adhere to his course of action. For a time, the French subsidies were actually stopped in consequence. The Huguenot refugees found predecessors of their own



faith in Brandenburg, both French and Swiss; and, in the course of time, the French immigrants in the Great Elector's States amounted to 20,000 souls; while not less than 611 Calvinistic noblemen had by the year 1687 been admitted into the Brandenburg army. (The curious attempt to attract to the Pomeranian coast English nonconformists engaged in trade or manufactures, whom Anglican intolerance in the latter part of Charles II's reign might have inclined to change their domicile, led to no enduring results.) The Great Elector's reward for his wise and generous hospitality to the victims of Lewis XIV's insane persecution was ample. Not only was the material prosperity of his dominions unmistakably increased by the settlement there of so large a number of intelligent and industrious immigrants—and a refinement of mind and manners introduced among his subjects on which in course of time, as Professor Philippson truly says, German culture at large was to be built up;—but also, and this quite directly, the religious life of his subjects, an end of which he never lost sight, was liberalised. For the Great Elector's endeavours on behalf of Toleration were by no means confined to the protection of French, or representations on behalf of Silesian, Protestants. In his own States, he had to resist the uncompromising bigotry of his Lutheran subjects, both in Brandenburg, where Reinhardt and the subsequently "martyred" Paul Gerhardt refused to recognise the "Reformed" as brothers or as Christians, and where the hatred of Calvinism exposed the corpse of the pious Electress Louisa Henrietta to insults on its very bed of state, and in Prussia, where the spirit of

intolerance had held its entry with the Reformation, and where Frederick William's appointment of "Syncretist" parsons actually brought upon him the threat of an appeal to his suzerain at Warsaw. Yet the Great Elector's championship of Toleration, which extended even to Mennonites, Socinians, and Jews, was not, like so much of the countenance given to the same course by his contemporaries, the product of religious indifference. He would willingly have brought about a union between the two Protestant Churches in his State; but there is no reason to suppose that he would have gone further. Though, even towards his Roman-Catholic subjects, he was so tolerant that in the earlier part of his reign rumours, which Queen Christina was fain to credit, arose of his inclination towards Rome, there cannot be the slightest doubt as to the consistent staunchness of his Protestantism—whether or not Professor Philippon be right in regarding it as the decisive element in the final change of policy which preceded his death.

All this, then, the Great Elector was, and much besides, in the many phases of his activity as a ruler, to which not more than justice is done in the earlier chapters of the volume before us. The lucid account of the various manifestations of his energy here given goes far to justify his biographer's assertion that Frederick William was possessed of a "truly universal intelligence." But, curiously enough—so limited is the work of every man by the conditions under which it is done—the one human interest that affected him but mediocresly was the education of the masses, who, in truth, hardly counted in the political thought of the

age, upon which the thought of arming them for the service of the State had not yet dawned. Of higher education he took some thought, while in his Universities, also, he asserted his sovereign authority by establishing his right, not only to give the ultimate decision as to the appointment of professors, but also to nominate them directly, when he saw special reason. He founded the University of Duisburg for his western dominions; but the *Universitas Brandenburgica* of Benedict Skytte—a kind of University of London *in excelsis*—was not brought down from the clouds, as had been proposed, to the empty Electoral castle at Tangermünde. But to many branches of science and learning the Great Elector's intellectual alertness made him a true friend, and to none more than to historical studies. He wished the annals of his own reign to be written in the light of an examination of original documents, which he was prepared with unusual liberality to place at the disposal of his historiographer; and, at last, he found in Pufendorf a pragmatic historian suited to what no doubt was the Great Elector's conception of the historiographer's task.

Professor Philippon, whose materials have been ampler than Pufendorf's and who cannot afford, like him, to leave the personal factor out of the calculation, is, to borrow a figure from a favourite diversion of the Great Elector's, well aware of the reverse of the medal. This is not to be sought in certain personal weaknesses to which Frederick William, like other great men, was subject, and which were unhappily most perceptible in the later period of his career. *Impiger* almost beyond compare, and certainly *iracundus*, he was by no means

*inexorabilis* in his family relations; and his fame has suffered much from his testamentary dispositions, on which Droysen first threw a clear light, and which favoured the interests of his younger sons at the cost of the laboriously built-up unity of the State. Professor Philippson, at least, makes it clear that the Electress Dorothea has in this as in other respects been exposed to unreasonable obloquy; since the first change in the Elector's testamentary arrangements was made on behalf of Prince Frederick (whose elder brother was then living) in deference to the wishes of his mother, Frederick William's first wife, the virtuous Louisa Henrietta. The tradition according to which, afterwards, under Dorothea's influence, the Great Elector kept Frederick from participation in affairs, seems erroneous. No doubt, the Electress Dorothea accepted a splendid bribe from France; but it may perhaps be set against this that she was, subsequently, induced by William of Orange to go over to his side for the sake of her son Philip. Corruption was part of the political atmosphere of the times; and the Great Elector, who was strong-minded enough never to have a Prime Minister of his own, not only permitted but demanded that his Ministers (they called each other *frère* among themselves) should on occasion receive gifts from foreign Powers.

Frederick William may be pardoned for yielding to his affection as a father and a husband, in a period when the inveterate Germanic tendency to subdivision was only beginning to give way to sounder principles. But what is to be said of the insincerities, the prevarications, the tergiversations, the utter mendacity, in short,



which have made his foreign policy, especially that of the years intervening between the Treaty of St Germain in 1679 and the Great Elector's death in 1688, a byword, even in the history of 17th and 18th century diplomacy? Professor Philippon makes no secret of his consciousness that this is not a case in which it would answer to attempt "rehabilitation." "With Droysen," who, to be sure, had to perform the same task for the whole gallery of Brandenburg Hohenzollerns, "the Great Elector is always in the right, even in the most desperate instances, and his adversaries are always in the wrong." His present biographer comments plainly on the depths of humiliation to which Frederick William descended in binding himself to France, and on the pretences amid which he executed the Protean manœuvre of unwinding himself from the self-imposed bonds. "No one else threw himself so unreservedly" (*so rückhaltlos*) "as he into the robbers' arms." And, again, with reference to a time (the spring of 1683) when most of the Estates of the Empire, and Poland itself, were guaranteeing their aid for meeting the Turkish invasion, and when Frederick William, while renewing his alliance with France, made his contribution of aid against the Turks depend on a series of pecuniary conditions designed to insure to him an increase of territory, we read:

While estates less powerful than he, with self-sacrificing patriotism, rushed into the struggle for the existence of their common country, Frederick William was only intent upon the gain of a Silesian principality or a piece of Anterior Pomerania. The bearing of Frederick William in the year 1683 forms the most melancholy part of his action as a ruler.

Professor Philipppson, thus, makes no attempt to throw a veil over what is obvious, or to shade off a glaring obliquity into an excusable error. And yet much in his narrative of these unhappy years has to me, I am bound to confess it, not a quite true ring. The writer is too eager to prove, in the first instance, that Brandenburg was not a servile vassal to France, but that purposes of his own determined the Elector to enter into a relation of dependence on the archfoe of the Empire from which he never altogether escaped, though at the time of his death the cord had nearly snapped. If so, it must be said that all these purposes, and more especially that of the ejection of the Swedes from Pomerania, remained unfulfilled. And, in the second place, the reader of this biography is given to understand that, though "a true German and resolved always to remain such," as he informed the English Minister Southwell in 1680, Frederick William was driven into a policy of delay by the elements of weakness and jealousy among his German fellow-Princes, and above all by the illwill of the House of Austria. The alliance with France was to be only an expedient "for the moment"; but the moment was not a very short one, and it lasted so long as there was a chance of Anterior Pomerania. Frederick William's refusal to enter into a bargain with his overbearing ally for the French occupation of Philippsburg may fairly be placed to the Elector's credit; but it seems extravagant to magnify his "liberation" of East Friesland from the foreigner as another act of German patriotism. The less said about his amenability to financial considerations the better, when one remembers, besides all the

trouble about the unpaid Spanish subsidies, not only the conditions asked by him in 1683, but his demand in 1685 of Schwiebus, in return for which he was prepared to join the Emperor against both France and the Turks, as well as the claims put forward by him at Ratisbon so late as October 1687. Indeed these last claims, which were partly based on his hopes in the Swedish War, were so unreasonable that his biographer is half inclined to suggest that they were intended to throw dust into the eyes of France and induce her to go on paying subsidies.

I have left myself no space for adverting to what many are likely to regard as the most interesting of the arguments advanced in this volume in support of Frederick William's title to be remembered as a great politician. He was, Professor Philippon holds, the first to think of the deliverance of England as indispensable for the success of the great design against France; he had thought of this as early as 1684, and it was he alone who gradually convinced William and the States-General of the necessity of the enterprise. Much in this latter proposition depends upon the details of the interviews between the Great Elector and the Prince of Orange at Cleves in August 1686, in which Pufendorf erroneously states Marshal Schomberg to have taken part on behalf of the English malcontent lords. This volume also contains much information, of special interest to English readers, as to the relations between Frederick William and the House of Lüneburg-Celle, which, though perilously near to an alliance with France at the time of the Great Elector's death, had, in the preceding period, pursued a very different policy from his own, and generally antagonistic to it.

## 21. THE PRUSSIAN CROWN<sup>1</sup>

(*The English Historical Review*, July 1889.)

ONE cannot affect much surprise at the tenderness which French historians have latterly begun to show for the political reputation of the first Prussian King; but it is not so evident as they seem to assume that his deserts have been left out in the cold in his own country. Modern Prussian writers are hardly to be blamed for passing lightly over the transactions which preceded or accompanied the acquisition of the Prussian royal Crown, just as certain proceedings which took place nearer home a hundred years later are not as a rule enlarged upon by admirers of the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Before the Elector Frederick, with a very imposing assumption of independence (had it but imposed upon anybody), placed a royal crown upon his head at Königsberg, a good many promises had been given, not all of which were destined to be fulfilled; and with the promises there had passed a good deal of money. It is therefore not astonishing that Cuhn's narrative of the acquisition, on which M. Waddington asserts that Droysen founded the summary contained in his *magnum opus*, should remain in manuscript in the Berlin archives, nor that of the most recent historians attracted by this subject, the one, M. Pribram, should be an Austro-Hungarian, and the other a Frenchman. With regard, however, to the

<sup>1</sup> Waddington, Albert, *L'Acquisition de la Couronne Royale de Prusse par les Hohenzollern*. (Paris, E. Leroux, 1888.)



qualities of Frederick's statesmanship in general, it has by no means been reserved for foreign pens to do justice to such merits as it possessed. Droysen, no doubt, while allowing him the credit of both activity and consistency in his foreign policy, has severely condemned its impotence, which he attributes largely to the attitude of dependence assumed by him towards the Emperor from the first—from the time, indeed, of the treacherous understanding concerning the Schwiebus cession into which he had entered while still only Electoral Prince. And he dwells with equal rigour on the economical sufferings to which the monarchy was exposed under Frederick's rule, and of which the heavy taxation, due in part to his extravagant expenditure, must share the blame. But Ranke, far more generously, acknowledges both the grandeur of the King's ideals and the actual advance which, apart from the matter of the Crown, the State made under his control; and the excellent sketch of his career in Vol. VII. of the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* is worth citing as a more recent effort in the same direction. Frederick I steadily fostered the growth of the Prussian army, the numbers of which he nearly doubled; and to the judicial system of his monarchy he secured not only freedom from external control, but a basis of unity of its own. Nor can it be denied that, with all drawbacks, the material prosperity of his States, on the whole, increased during his reign, while that of most other continental countries was decaying. Moreover, he consistently upheld those traditions of Tolerance, and of hospitality towards the victims of bigotry expelled from other lands, which had been bequeathed to him by

his father, the Great Elector; and he rendered services to the advance of intellectual culture in northern Germany which have been denied by none of his critics. Altogether, though there was nothing of greatness in Frederick I, and least of all anything personally attractive—for, as M. Waddington says with incontrovertible truth, *il ne valait pas* his first Queen, Sophia Charlotte—yet his reign is to be regarded as having accomplished something besides his great design of acquiring a royal Crown for himself and his dynasty. Its real inferiority in achievement to the reign which succeeded it lay in Frederick I's inability to perform, or even to conceive, the task actually carried through by Frederick William I—the establishment, as on a *rocher de bronze*, of a frugal and efficient system of administration in both military and civil matters. This difference M. Waddington appears to have overlooked in the contrast between father and son drawn by him in the course of a peroration of which the tone is perhaps pitched in rather too high a key. Who in the world could object to his preferring *aux divertissements insipides de la tabagie, les fêtes splendides et gracieuses de Charlottenbourg, au soudard qui battait sa femme et ses filles le roi poli et galant qui, malgré quelques colères, chercha toujours à observer envers son entourage les règles de la plus stricte courtoisie?* Sophia Charlotte and Sophia Dorothea the younger might have been excused for instituting such comparisons; in a political historian they seem to call for the epithet which, on his next page, M. Waddington unhesitatingly bestows upon the criticisms of the late Professors Droysen and von Noorden.

The question, however, which it is M. Waddington's primary concern to argue in the present volume, and which he argues with remarkable ability, is a different one. Was, or was not, Frederick's acquisition of the royal Crown in itself an event of serious moment, a distinct stage in the growth of the greatness of his dynasty, of the monarchy under its sway, and of the German nation at large, of which they have in our own times come to hold the acknowledged leadership. The mere desire for the royal dignity was epidemic among the more important Princes of the Empire in the Elector Frederick III's day. From the time when William III—himself a *roi parvenu*, and a kinsman of the Elector of Brandenburg—had attempted to introduce the Duchess Sophia and her descendants by name into the text of the Bill of Rights, the House of Hanover, whether it would or not, could not fail to speculate on its chances of the English Throne; and in the very year of Frederick's coronation these chances were converted into a legal expectancy. The House of Wittelsbach narrowly missed the Spanish, and its chief thought himself entitled to a Batavian, Crown. From the rule of a Prince wedded, like Charles XII, to none but Bellona, the Swedish monarchy must inevitably pass either to his sister the wife of the Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Cassel, or to his nephew the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. More fantastic hopes may have occupied the thoughts of other Princes; at all events M. Waddington reminds us that, towards the end of the 17th century, John William, Elector Palatine of the Neuburg line, was negotiating with an Armenian merchant about an expedition which was to end in

making him king of a free Christian Armenia. But the Crown at which Frederick III aimed was intended to make him stronger at home in his own German dominions; a greater personage in the Empire to which he was resolved not to owe his new dignity, but whose recognition it was of the essence of his scheme to secure from the very first; it was to consolidate his long and broken string of dominions among themselves, and to emancipate the eponymous province of Prussia proper, all reservation of reversionary rights notwithstanding, from such connexion with Poland as remained. These ends, at all events, Frederick III may be allowed to have had consciously before him, and they were, one and all, fulfilled. The remoter results to which his act, accomplished under the conditions which attended it, directly contributed, may have remained, more or less dark, to him. He may not have foreseen the First Partition of Poland, but the endurance of a Polish *enclave* in the new Prussian kingdom was no longer possible so soon as that kingdom had been established. He may not have either divined or desired the great duel with Austria that was to supervene; but his resolute Protestantism, which withstood a triple battery of propagandist endeavours and led him politely to decline the direct intervention of the Holy See in his design, can hardly have left him blind to the fact that the State whose importance was made manifest by his new dignity thereby became in the eyes of all men the representative Protestant Power in Germany.

Of course, the greater part of this volume is occupied with an exposition in detail of the steps by which the elector Frederick III executed his "great design." The



diplomacy of his age was not celebrated for swiftness, least of all when a question of "dignity" was the subject of its efforts; and neither at Vienna nor elsewhere was it the custom for those officers of State and Court whose influence was worth securing to proffer it, without receiving in return the "gratification" which in grosser spheres was, more simply, called a bribe. These things being taken into account, it is impossible to assert that the negotiations for the acquisition of the Prussian Crown were, speaking relatively, of a very prolonged nature. There seems no reason for accepting the common tradition, on which certain German historians have sought to put the most patriotic glosses within their power, that the scheme was originally suggested to the Great Elector by France. M. Waddington has traced the story back to Poellnitz, whose authority is not exactly of the highest, and has shown that Prince Eugene's supposed repetition of the statement occurs in a letter which has been proved spurious. On the other hand, it certainly appears, on the testimony of Bartholdi, the singularly able diplomatist who negotiated Frederick III's design at the Court of Vienna, that Frederick William actually entertained a project of declaring himself King of the Wends, and only abandoned it at the time of the Peace of St Germain, largely, of course, because of his apprehension of offending the King and the Republic of Poland. Of greater interest is the statement of Ilgen, made in a paper written in 1715, that in 1686, at the time of the conclusion of the Secret Treaty which attached the House of Brandenburg closely to the House of Austria, a royal Crown was promised to the former in addition

to the cession of the Schwiebus circle. There is much probability in M. Waddington's suggestion that if such a promise was made, it was made to the Electoral Prince, who was at the same time (not very much to the credit of his fair fame) negotiating with Austria on his own account, and not to his father the Elector. In any case, there is good reason for supposing that Frederick III had familiarised himself with the conception, when two years later (in 1688) he succeeded to the electorate; and the story of its having been suggested to him by William III's refusal at the Hague to offer him a *fauteuil* may keep company with the anecdote of the Licinian rogations having originated in the jealous desire of Licinius' wife for a dozen of lictors to precede her husband. As M. Waddington points out, there is not even an agreement as to whether the fatal act of royal pride was committed in 1691, 1695, or 1696. What is of more importance, his researches have enabled him to prove definitely that the negotiations on the subject of the Crown with the Emperor, to which Frederick III had resolved to confine himself in the first instance, began as early as the year 1693. They were broken off in 1697 for nearly a year, and, after their resumption, were brought to an end by the conclusion of the famous *Kron-Tractat*, on November 16th, 1700. The reason of their interruption is to be sought in certain Ministerial changes at the Imperial Court, and in the succession quarrel in Mecklenburg, in which the Emperor and the Elector took opposite sides. That the transaction, on being resumed, was carried to a successful issue, was due, not to the accidental intervention of the Jesuit father Wolf—an

account of whose curious career with its mighty imaginings, modest successes, and final disappointment would form an admirable monograph—but to the necessities of the House of Austria when the War of the Spanish Succession was approaching. The Treaty was actually concluded only two days before the death of Charles II of Spain became known at Vienna. In this sense, M. Waddington may say without exaggeration that the Prussian kingship was in part the work of Lewis XIV and of the War which his ambition provoked. But it must at the same time be allowed that the dullness of the Emperor Leopold I and the rapacity of his Ministers contrived to give Frederick by far the best of the bargain. The real *quid pro quo* consisted in the 8000 troops which the Elector engaged to furnish in the event of the outbreak of the War, and even these had already been promised in the Secret Treaty of 1686. All the rest was of small significance; nor was the Imperial diplomacy even successful in maintaining a form of clause which made the Elector declare that without the Emperor's assent he would not have been authorised to take the Crown. Instead of this, Bartholdi succeeded in making his master simply say that such had never been his intention.

The negotiations with Poland form another very curious chapter in the history of these transactions, but can only be adverted to here. In this quarter, blindness alone could fail to perceive the peril involved in granting the Elector's wish. It is true that, by an early *volte-face* the goodwill of King Augustus the Strong had been secured from the outset and was fostered by his confessor, the Jesuit Vota, and his *protégé*, the

famous Livonian Patkul. But there seems no proof that Augustus concluded an actual Treaty of Recognition with Frederick before the coronation of Frederick and, in any case, this would by no means have involved the goodwill of the Republic. And though the powerful Cardinal Primate was gained over to Frederick's interests, no recognition of the new dignity was obtained either by him or by his son from the Polish Diet; it was only on the eve of the First Partition of Poland, and with the aid of Russian bayonets, that Frederick the Great, in return for his promise to respect the rights of the Republic of Poland, was gratified by her formal acknowledgment of his royal title. As compared with the interest of the Emperor and Poland, that of the other European States in giving or withholding the desired recognition was insignificant. As a matter of fact, Frederick I was, within the earlier half of the year 1701, recognised by all the leading Princes of the Empire, with the exception among the Protestants of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, brother-in-law of Charles XII, and among the Catholics of Max Emmanuel of Bavaria and his brother the Elector of Cologne, of whom the latter exhorted his spiritual brothers to wait with him till the Catholic religion, the Empire and the Teutonic Order, had, in the first instance, received complete satisfaction. As for the rights of the Teutonic Order, they and their treatment form a peculiar chapter in the history of the establishment of the dignity of "King in Prussia." The Order continued to protest till it ceased to exist; in the meantime, such satisfaction as might be derived from the appropriation of their Black Eagle as the emblem of a



different kind of Order founded by the newly crowned King was not denied to the Teutonic Knights in their retirement. As to the Catholic religion, its best "satisfaction" was never to be gathered in, though Father Wolf had been so ready to be its agent, Father Vota had, so to speak, celebrated Frederick's conversion beforehand in masses said to have been attended by him in person, and Bishop Zaluski had been fain to clinch the matter by means of a brief from Pope Innocent XII. The reader must be referred to M. Waddington's review of this episode and of the endeavours of *un prêtre de l'oratoire nommé Theiner* (surely no very courteous reference to a wellknown name) to prove that the first Duke of Prussia was converted to catholicism, and the first King nearly so. But the observation may perhaps be permitted that Duke Albert's conversion, if it actually occurred, was not unprovoked, while that of Frederick I would have been a political suicide which would have involved the destinies of his dynasty in its ruin.

The survey of the relations between Brandenburg-Prussia and the various non-German States of Europe affecting the question of the royal Crown, which M. Waddington has been at the pains to add, renders his volume a valuable contribution to the political history of the period with which it is concerned; and the labour liberally bestowed by him upon his work has not been thrown away. A writer on diplomatic history should, like an able diplomatic agent, be armed at all points and ready in all directions, instead of, like a certain Foreign Secretary of the past, priding himself on ignoring the lesser Legations. In this, as in other ways, M. Waddington's book is admirably complete.

## 22. RHEINSBERG<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, March 13, 1880.)

MR ANDREW HAMILTON is a remarkably agreeable writer; but we confess to having felt some difficulty, on closing the second of these delightful and unpretending volumes, in accounting to ourselves for the attraction which they had exercised upon us. We incline, however, to think that this attraction was due to the element of the unexpected to be found in them. It is not that they are especially witty, for Mr Hamilton's efforts in this direction, though frequent and sustained, are not preeminently fascinating. Nor is the phenomenon of an entertaining book about a corner of the Mark Brandenburg really surprising; for the Mark is the cradle of an important series of events in the annals of Europe, and around that cradle both legend and history have woven a multitude of interesting associations. What is undeniably noteworthy is to meet with a work full of entertainment, and by no means devoid of instruction, the subject of which has already been in part copiously though incidentally treated by a masterhand; for no division of Mr Carlyle's most elaborate historical narrative is more successful in its way than that in which he deals with the last stage of his Crown-prince's "apprenticeship," and with his spiritual *Wanderjahre*. There is the more reason for congratulating a later writer upon his literary skill in

<sup>1</sup> Rheinsberg, *Memorials of Frederick the Great and Prince Henry of Prussia*. By Andrew Hamilton. 2 vols. John Murray. 1880.

effectively treating such a subject afresh, when it is of a nature which cannot exactly be called inexhaustible, and when he proves unable to shed any new light upon its most problematical points. Mr Hamilton leaves two questions—not in themselves very difficult to answer roughly, but still not quite satisfactorily solved—very much where he found them; and has nothing of his own to contribute by way of reason why Frederick first would, and then would not, live with his wife, and why his brother, Prince Henry, could serve, but could not endure, him. Although, however, these pleasant pages have not helped finally to set our minds at rest about matters which grave historians have either imperfectly discussed or discreetly evaded, *Rheinsberg* succeeds in recalling attention both to those matters themselves and to the chapters of history to which they belong. Taking advantage of the widely prevalent taste for bits of still life on paper as well as on canvas, and for the quiet methods of an art which understands how to attract with the aid of materials at first sight uninviting if not repulsive, Mr Hamilton has contrived to give a breath of literary life to the dead palace by the lake, among sand and heath and forest, and, by bringing his scenery home to his readers with singular skill, to make certain passages of historical biography, momentarily at least, more vivid than even Mr Carlyle's conscientious use of books had made them. Grateful for this result, we have no desire to cavil at Mr Hamilton's devices for easing or ornamenting his discursive narrative. The figures or episodes of the guard of the stage-coach, the landlord of the "*Rathskeller*," the talkative tailor, and the rest of them, must be allowed as

part of his stock-in-trade to the author of a work which seems designed to obscure rather than to reveal the fact that he is alike a modest and a conscientious historical student. This, Mr Hamilton's use of his authorities, and indeed the refreshingly accurate way in which he cites them, would alone prove him to be. At the same time, as he assumes the existence of so moderate a degree of interest in his theme on the part of most English readers, he might perhaps advantageously have assumed a correspondingly scanty measure of knowledge. The very name, for instance, of the Princess who was the *châtelaine* of Rheinsberg during its most brilliant period is hardly mentioned by Mr Hamilton except in a footnote; though, doubtless, many of his readers would have been glad to have their memory refreshed as to her antecedents and connexions. It is not every one who can have even Carlyle at his fingers' ends, though few will be likely to quarrel with Mr Hamilton's enthusiastic admiration of his great predecessor, to whom his style occasionally offers the sincerest kind of flattery. We cannot help adding that he moves among his references and allusions with the ease of one who really knows German as well as Germany; we have only noticed one a single (frankly avowed) instance of want of familiarity with German ways. A "cucumber cure" is, or was, no uncommon expedient of German medical treatment; and, we believe, enjoys high esteem among persons who have chanced to survive it.

Landscapes like those which Mr Hamilton describes with much tact and skill—solitudes of forest with patches of clearings so bare as to seem "trysting-places



for all the winds," large lakes "very lovely but very grave . . . having in" them "nothing of mere transient sadness and knowing nothing of change," and what modern artistic jargon would call "sand-symphonies" in drab and grey—must be left to create their impression slowly and gradually. For the rest, the palace of Rheinsberg, and probably the town from which it takes its name, have seen their best days; the forlorn hope of the citizens, the railway, has left them aside; and if the palace itself is as yet neither bodily *abgetragen* nor converted into the Normal School of which Carlyle had heard rumours, nor put to any other useful purpose, the reason probably is that even the thrifty Prussian Administration desired to spare so interesting a monument of the Prussian dynasty. This kind of piety is naturally thought to be more loudly called for in the Mark Brandenburg than, for instance, in the duchy of Schleswig. Yet, even at Rheinsberg, it seems to be carried to no superstitious length; and Mr Hamilton observed with intelligible astonishment the neglected condition of a double memorial erected by Prince Henry to his elder—King Frederick II's younger—brother, Augustus William, Prince of Prussia, the great-grandfather of the Emperor William I. The Prince was not buried here, and it appears to be uncertain whether his heart was actually placed in the urn which professes to contain his ashes; but, in any case, it is strange that the cloud which overhung the unfortunate Prince's last days should have been allowed, as it were, to settle round the monument of his younger brother's splenetic affection. For, in honouring the memory of Augustus William, Prince Henry was casting

an oblique reflexion upon the King who had attributed to the Prince of Prussia's failure the greater part of the misfortunes of a perilous season of his struggles.

As is well known, the historical associations of Rheinsberg belong only to a relatively short section of Prussian history; and neither the palace nor the town has any antiquarian interest to speak of, dating from earlier times. A robuster faith than any which these latter days can sustain would be requisite for a revival of curiosity with regard to the legend of Remus, the brother of Romulus, as the founder of Remusberg, Remsberg, or Reinsberg; though Frederick the Great desperately clung to his belief in the silly tale, in spite of the critical sneers of Voltaire. It was, probably, an invention of the early part of the 17th century—of all the ages of German pedantry the most extravagantly pedantic. Mr Hamilton has been at the trouble of tracing the tale as near to its fountain-head as possible, having had in his hands “the only documentary evidence known” on the subject—a volume of the *Miscellanea Lipsiensia* of the year 1717, in which Christopher Pyl, M.A., rector of the Grammar School at Antlam, in Pomerania, reprints (apparently in good faith) a tract entitled

“Sepulchrum Remi, fratris Romuli, in monte REMI, vulgo Remsberg, nuper detectum, erutis binis marmoribus uno vetustissimo, altero recentiore. Quibus pervulgatus ille error de REMO, a fratre interfecto, confutatur.” The “vetustissimum marmor” in question “was about three-quarters of a Brandenburg ell in length and half an ell in breadth.” On one side of it were six birds in relief, “without doubt the six vultures which appeared to Remus,” proving that “of his own accord he had left Rome to his brother, and, followed by a great multitude

of shepherds, had penetrated into these regions, where, in this delightful spot, he had settled down, and spent the rest of his life, and died." On the other side was an inscription, many of the letters of which were effaced and illegible.

What evidence could be more conclusive? and one is struck afresh by the truth of the observation that the points of view are many and various from which the credibility of early Roman history may be discussed! Prince Frederick told Voltaire, as an ascertained fact, that two monks, sent out by the Pope, had come to Rheinsberg in quest of the place founded by Remus, and had caused search to be made for his ashes in the island in the lake which is called the Isle of Remus to this day. Prince Henry drew the island into his grounds in 1771, before which date it had been in the hands of a tenant, and crowned the *Arx Remi* with gimcracks in the true Twitnam style. *Petits soupers* were discussed in a Chinese pagoda in honour of the elder brother—him of Rome, not him of Potsdam; now all has vanished, and Remus is as completely forgotten as Augustus William.

According to Mr Hamilton, "some have thought" that the whole Remus business was "got up as a compliment" to Justus von Bredow, who early in the 17th century was lord of the manor of Rheinsberg. He sold it to the Lochow family (every name "ends in ow" in those parts); on whose dying-out, after terrible sufferings undergone by the district in the Thirty Years' War and the times of the Great Elector, it fell to the bestowal of that Prince. He gave it to an officer, from whom it was soon purchased by Privy Councillor Chenevix de Bévillé, whose son in his turn

sold it in 1734 to King Frederick William I, when the latter in his forgiving mood was anxious to gratify his son, the Crown-prince, by acquiring it for him as a residence. M. Chenevix de Bévillé was one of the many Huguenots who left France before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; while two cousins of his took flight to England and Ireland, where the name Chenevix still survives in an honoured conjunction. It is not a little curious that Rheinsberg, which was successively to become the residence of two Princes who cherished, each in his own way, so warm a predilection for things French, should have French associations of a still earlier date. Mr Hamilton informs us that "more refugees had settled in the county" (lordship?) "of Ruppin than in any other part of the Mark, the devastations of the Thirty Years' War having thinned the population more than elsewhere. Whole villages were repeopled by the French." To Rheinsberg French refugees were more especially attracted by the French Protestant chaplain whom the Bévilles had brought with them into the Middle Mark, and by the place of worship which had been built for his ministrations. It appears to have been in the capacity of regular French preacher, as well as almoner to the household, that a divine was invited to Rheinsberg by the Crown-prince Frederick who plays some small part in Frederick's biography, and was ultimately minister of the French Episcopal Church in the Savoy. Jean Deschamps was a pupil of the famous Wolff, the author of "the best philosophy going," and had translated one of his minor works. In Deschamps's Sunday services a more volatile divine seems afterwards to have taken occasional part—



Jordan, who was, like Deschamps, a Frenchman born in exile, but who appears to have been a general utility friend and companion of the true native *abbé* type. He was a man of books, if not of learning; and, while he contributed to the Prince's pleasures, he helped to manage his business, particularly the very important loan department. For Frederick's finances were in chronic disorder, and his loans were, at times, of a nature not unlikely to involve him in worse than pecuniary embarrassments. Jordan is thus invited by his royal patron to return to the sphere of his Sunday "duty" and everyday pleasures:

Notre petit prêtre à rabat  
Vous marque son impatience;  
Il veut, dit-il, votre présence  
Pour célébrer un sien sabbat  
Avec grande magnificence.  
Son marguillier, ce petit fat,  
Prétend en fredons marotiques  
Psalmodier de longs cantiques  
Pour amuser les auditeurs;  
Ils feront baïller les apôtres,  
Qui, je crois, du goût de nous autres,  
Connaissent des plaisirs meilleurs.

The style *à la* Clement Marot was certainly not that which the Crown-prince preferred, either in or out of chapel; and perhaps the descendants of the Huguenot refugees at Rheinsberg and in its neighbourhood may have shaken their grave heads at some of the French company brought down to the Prince's little Court, and at some of the elaborate frescoes painted in the palace by the Parisian master, Antoine Pesne. The mere fact, however, that the Crown-

princess was so happy at Rheinsberg shows that the laws of propriety were in no marked degree violated there; moreover, the Crown-prince was still under a vigilant, though now kindly, fatherly eye. And, in truth, Frederick's nature, as well as his circumstances, inclined him to self-restraint; and, in this respect at all events, his brother Prince Henry was more genuinely a Frenchman than he. During Prince Henry's occupancy of Rheinsberg there was less of literature and more of gaiety in the palace and its precincts than during his brother's quadriennium. A "Court of Opposition," as Mr Hamilton calls Prince Henry's, is usually a lively one—as the Suffolk Correspondence and other illustrations abundantly show. But Prince Henry, besides being as musical as the King, was not less fond of theatricals than of music, and had a French theatre at Rheinsberg after that at Berlin had been broken up. In his later years, two visits to Paris completed his transformation into a Frenchman; but, though the friendships which he had formed were naturally on the side of the old *régime*, he had independence—or perversity—of mind enough to take views of his own as to the French Revolution and of the proceedings of the Coalition. Though the hospitality of Rheinsberg was at one time or another freely extended to the *émigrés*, the Prince kept both his ears and his doors open to other visitants, and, after the Peace of Bâle, received at Rheinsberg an active, and, as the people at Berlin thought dangerous, member of the French Embassy. Prince Henry's influence is supposed to have helped to accomplish the pacification in question—about as sorry a reminiscence, after all is said, as

could connect itself with the name of any Prussian Prince.

As already observed, Prince Henry's antipathy to his great brother, though copiously enough illustrated in Mr Hamilton's Second Volume, receives no new explanation there. Prince Henry's nature was, like Frederick's and their father's, altogether despotic; in a different dynasty and under different circumstances, the jealous hatred which could bear no brother on the throne might have found even more violent ways of expressing itself. Still, it was going tolerably far, even after the hero's death, to set up a monument at Rheinsberg—"the biggest, gravest, and most solid of" the Prince's "architectural undertakings"—"to the memory of the Prince of Prussia and the other heroes of the Seven Years' War, with the exception of the King." One other portrait is of course also, though from a different cause, wanting on it—that of the victor of Freiberg, the last and (if the world would but have believed it) the one decisive, battle of the Seven Years' War. More interesting to posterity than this monument of Prince Henry's unextinguishable jealousy would have been the Commentary which he wrote on Frederick's history of the war itself, but which (fortunately, perhaps, for his reputation) he ordered to be destroyed after his death. Swift's commentary on Burnet would have here found an equal in bitterness, if not in roughness of tone. Short and unbloody as the War of 1778-9 (the War of the Bavarian Succession) was, Prince Henry found time in it for resigning his command; and, after the death of Frederick, it was not long before the relations between his successor and his brother were not

very different from what those between Prince Henry and himself had been.

Prince Henry's conjugal relations, like many things in his life, ran curiously parallel in a certain measure to those of the brother whom he learnt to hate so bitterly. Prince Henry and Princess Wilhelmina kept Court together at Rheinsberg for just the same period of time as the Crown-prince and his consort had done (four years), with tastes not very different from theirs and under circumstances of income quite as uneasy. The Princess Henry seems, however, to have been extremely attractive, a lady of *esprit* and beauty, known at the Berlin Court (as Mr Hamilton states on an authority to which we rejoice to find him frequently refer—the charming Memoirs of Countess Voss) “by a whole list of endearing epithets—‘*La Belle Fée*,’ ‘*La Divina*,’ ‘*La Toute Divine*,’ ‘*L’Incomparable*,’ etc.” In the Crown-prince’s time, when the Rheinsberg Court had been a very *pays du tendre* for the invention of poetic names and epithets, a more modest designation had appertained to the Princess to whom Frederick had given his hand in an obedient moment, and of whom, during his father’s lifetime, he continued to appear a contented husband, after having been a far from enthusiastic bridegroom. Other Princes have, on their accession to the throne, rapidly concluded marriages which the policy of their predecessors had delayed; Frederick II adopted the converse process. It is to be regretted that the present opportunity has not been taken to present a more distinct portrait of Queen Elizabeth Christina, especially as Mr Hamilton refers to a monograph concerning her. We are not altogether inclined



to take her insipidity on trust; and though her pietism may not have been to her husband's taste, yet he might have allowed his wife to read or even to write psalms, as the Great Elector had done before him. And, upon the whole, had it suited the despotic nature of King Frederick II even virtually to own himself in the wrong, there seems reason to believe that he would have put an end to his separation from his Queen before his death. He said of her favourite, the pious and sentimental Gellert, that he was the most reasonable of all German men of letters; and some praise of the same kind seems to have been due to the wife who had remained "Constance," though he had ceased to be "Constant," as in the pleasant artificial days of the Order of Bayard at Rheinsberg.

## 23. LEWIS XV AND THE REVERSAL OF ALLIANCES<sup>1</sup>

(*The English Historical Review*, October 1898.)

M. RICHARD WADDINGTON'S work forms an addition of signal value to the literature which has gradually accumulated round one of the most interesting chapters of modern diplomatic history, without always succeeding in throwing light upon its difficulties. I need hardly say that the candour of statement and the dignity of style which characterise this volume are alike fully worthy of the reputation of its distinguished author. Although, as will be seen, he is at no pains to disguise either his historical point of view or the political sympathies and antipathies which have helped to determine it, he has judiciously abstained from the polemical tone which has elsewhere marked the discussion of the subject. He has at the same time imposed upon himself definite limits, and, although entering more fully than might have seemed indispensable for his purpose into the humiliating incident of the British expatriation of the Acadians, has not represented it as having exercised any contemporary influence upon international sentiment. Indeed, he has pointed out of how little use the Acadians were at the siege of Fort Beauséjour (Cumberland), although their efforts for provisioning the fort are popularly supposed to have

<sup>1</sup> Waddington, Richard, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances et Préliminaires de la Guerre de Sept Ans, 1754-1756*. Paris, Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1896.

served as a principal reason or pretext for the cruel doom inflicted upon them. On the other hand, he has judiciously refrained from attempting in his final chapter anything like an exhaustive treatment of the question as to the responsibility for the actual outbreak of the War in Germany. Upon this still-vexed problem, inasmuch as, strictly speaking, it lies outside the range of M. Waddington's enquiry, I will, so far as possible, avoid touching<sup>1</sup>.

The history of the "Preliminaries of the Seven Years' War," and of the shifting of the relations between the chief European States which preceded and exercised an influence upon the circumstances of its outbreak, necessarily comes to an end with the latter part of August 1756. On the 29th of that month, Frederick II crossed the Saxon frontier. It seems equally clear that in this shifting of alliances the cardinal change was that of the relations between the French and Austrian Governments, and that, inasmuch as no key is needed for unlocking the policy of Maria Theresa and her Minister, the position at this date which above all requires elucidation is the position of France. Unhappily her *triste souverain*, Lewis XV, was for practical purposes "France" as much as Lewis XIV had been when at the height of his glory; and the principal title of M. Waddington's book is therefore only too well justified. As a matter of course, an explanation of the position of France necessitates a narrative of its antecedents. I observe that a controversy, doubtless worth the ink which is being freely

<sup>1</sup> It is treated in the next paper (24) reprinted in the present volume

expended upon it, is at present in progress on the broad theme of the final purpose of history, whether it be to expound *wie es eigentlich gewesen* or *wie es eigentlich geworden*. The evolution of French policy during the two years preceding the opening of the Seven Years' War in Europe illustrates the distinction without a difference between Ranke's time-honoured definition and its last fashionable substitute. The position, then, of France in August 1756 was so radically false from the point of view of her interests, whether immediate or remote, that one might at first sight find some difficulty in believing its significance to have remained obscure even to Lewis XV, whose moral effeteness had by no means altogether obscured his intelligence or killed his pride. Yet, when we enquire rather more closely, we find that the Treaty concluded by him three months previously with Austria, and as yet succeeded by no further formal agreement, was, in the almost unanimous opinion of his brother Sovereigns, including Frederick II himself, one that strengthened the assurances of peace, at all events for the present. Cardinal de Bernis, the principal agent in the negotiations for the first Treaty of Versailles, and one who took pride and pleasure in it as the work of his hands, afterwards contended that it was not this compact of 1756, but the later arrangements of 1757 and 1758, which really secured to Austria the armed cooperation of France in the war, and which thus entailed upon her the dire consequences of failure. Yet it is not the less certain that, before the first shot was fired in the War, the Government of Lewis XV had acknowledged the recovery of Silesia by Austria to be a primary object



of the Alliance between the two Powers, by engaging to continue his own hostilities with Great Britain during the progress of the Austrian enterprise against Prussia, and by subordinating the arrangements as to the Austrian Netherlands, which involved the French equivalent, to the reconquest of the lost province. While thus binding herself to carry on war with Great Britain beyond a date at which it might suit her own interests to do so, France had undertaken engagements as to both men and money binding her to an active cooperation in arms that, in actual gains, was to bring her nothing but a certain accession of territory to be carved out of the Austrian Netherlands, on their exchange in the Infante Don Philip's favour for Parma and Piacenza. France might furthermore find her account in invading Hanover—a proceeding which, whatever its results, would leave Great Britain standing very much where she did, and in which France was still far from being assured of the countenance of her new ally. For the assertion of Cardinal Bernis, that the French negotiators at Compiègne secured the renunciation *in perpetuum* by Austria of the British alliance, imperfectly agrees with the other evidence on the subject, and remains, in fact, nothing but an assertion. Of course no importance need be attached to such protestations as those which Count Colloredo addressed to Lord Granville (his title, by the way, is in this volume consistently misspelt Grenville, just as Lord Albemarle's name is always printed as Albermarle), who, according to Horace Walpole, replied with much spirit: "We understand it only as a treaty of neutrality, and can but be glad of it; the people in

general look on it otherwise; and I fear a time will come when it may be right for us, and may be our inclination, to assist your mistress again; but the prepossession against her will be too strong—nobody then will dare to be a Lord Granville.”

Under any circumstances, however, no bargain could on the face of it have been more one-sided; and M. Waddington's diplomatic instincts almost carry him away when he declares that “the advantages secured by Austria in the treaty of Versailles and in the offensive alliance which would result from it were so evident that nobody has even thought of blaming Maria Theresa and her minister, notwithstanding the scanty success which attended their enterprise.” Undoubtedly, the assumption that Maria Theresa was, on historic or any other grounds, called upon to adhere permanently to the British alliance, whether before or after the conclusion of the Treaty of Westminster, borders on the ridiculous; and the House of Austria and its counsellors must have been well aware that voices and interests had long made themselves heard in England—the Walpole interest, for instance—which had rated at a very low value the claims of this traditional association. Again, it would be even more absurd to hold the Empress and her trusted adviser responsible for their indifference to the consequences of her action for the future of the Germanic Empire—an indifference of which her Prussian adversary had set her a signal example when he concluded his alliance with France in 1741; the Habsburgs could not know to what account the Hohenzollerns would ultimately turn this particular Cadmean venture. But it seems to me impossible to

keep apart the dexterity with which Kaunitz secured this particular means towards his end, and his rashness in enabling his mistress to pursue that end itself. His sagacity in recognising the feasibility of a revolution in Austria's "system" of alliances, and the remarkable skill with which, after he had himself, during his Paris embassy, but slightly advanced his object, it was consummated within a relatively brief space of time by Starhemberg, may be readily acknowledged, without an approval being implied of the policy which it was their ultimate purpose to subserve. Apart from the fact, strongly insisted on by Max Lehmann, that the organisation of the Austrian army was still thoroughly antiquated and radically defective, and from the further fact (to be brought home in a most startling fashion before the War was over) that Russia was as uncertain an ally in the long run as she was sure to be an unready one at the outset, Kaunitz, in securing the adhesion of France to his projects, miscalculated the energy, under different guidance from that to which she had recently been accustomed, of what the Duke of Cumberland would have called her *ennemi naturel*. And I am inclined to think that, under the influence of diplomatic impressions which the personal ascendancy of George II had long succeeded in conveying, he misunderstood the real character of the relations between Great Britain and the Hanoverian electorate.

But, although I cannot hold that M. Waddington has said the last word on the policy of Kaunitz, it will be more to the present purpose to indicate the general line of the argument by which he accounts for the success of the Chancellor in bending France and her sovereign to the preliminary requirements of his great

design. Perhaps it may be worth remarking, that not more notice than appears necessary is bestowed in these pages upon the tradition which attributes a leading share in the transfer of the alliance of France from Prussia to Austria to the personal influence, animated by the personal wishes and resentments, of Madame de Pompadour. The instincts of the favourite, as forming part and parcel of the *régime* to which the moral decadence of the sovereign had condemned France, could not but be in favour of peace; and there can be little doubt that, early in 1755, this influence contributed to the rejection of the scheme of retaliating upon Great Britain for her proceedings in American waters, and preventing their further progress, by a brisk European war, in furtherance of which Frederick II (then admirably represented at Versailles by Knyphausen) was only too happy to point out the best means of annoying his uncle. "It would only be," Knyphausen wrote, "at the very last extremity that she would consent to a land war, which would remove the King to a distance from her person, and would cause him to forgo the habit of seeing and consulting her." But, this peril past, there seems no reason for assuming that she took a leading part in the Austro-French negotiations which ensued, although her preferences may very probably, like those of Lewis himself, have favoured the more dignified and catholic Court. For she had naturally become a *dévôte* as the years went on, and we know that Bernis was careful to touch upon the consequences which the Anglo-Prussian understanding might have for the interests of religion. But there is no evidence as to the decisive nature of the intervention of Madame de Pompadour at the critical stage of the



negotiations (the end of April 1756); and M. Waddington points out that, notwithstanding her sensibility to the freespokenness of Frederick II, she had charged Nivernais with a special message of goodwill to the King when, all too late, that diplomatist started on the mission doomed to so disappointing a termination. Starhemberg, in begging Kaunitz that due notice should be taken of the services rendered by the favourite, must have referred to the later rather than the earlier stages of the negotiations, which she and Bernis then exerted themselves most effectively to carry to a point at which their progress would satisfy the Austrian requirements. Unluckily, though intelligibly enough, it is precisely during this later period that the documentary evidence of the progress of the Franco-Austrian negotiations almost entirely fails us.

The isolation to which Great Britain was in imminent danger of being exposed, in the event of a European War with France, was no secret to her Government. The skill of Keene, a remarkably capable diplomatist, had secured the neutrality of Spain, notwithstanding the efforts of the Duc de Duras. In Russia, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who, on the other hand, cannot be asserted, with all his cleverness, to have been a political agent of high ability, was not until September 1755 able to conclude a Treaty—a very ambiguous piece of work when it had been concluded. But it was in the revision of the relations between Great Britain and Austria that a rift in the old system of alliances first became perceptible. No two Powers had, respectively, been more accustomed to appeal to the remembrance of what each had done for the other; yet there could no longer be any doubt that, with their

interests, the methods of maintaining them must come more and more to diverge. At Vienna, where we were intelligently but not over-effectively represented, Kaunitz might choose to declare that the best way of defending Hanover was to attack the King of Prussia, i.e. to assist in the recovery of Silesia. But, in England, public feeling was divided between a desire to hold our own at any cost at sea and in America and an unwillingness to become, as Temple not long afterwards phrased it, an "insurance office" for Hanover by means of a series of subsidy treaties. Old Horace Walpole's distrust of the House of Austria had doubtless been long since discounted. But, among leading English politicians—and even in the cabinet—a difference of opinion was beginning to manifest itself as to our system of alliances, and a serious risk might be run if that uncertainty were to continue. King George II and his Hanoverian Ministers, including Münchhausen, who, in foreign as well as in domestic electoral affairs, was a statesman of real mark, would have had Great Britain take part in the project, hatched by Fleming (one of those active builders of schemes with whom Saxony has in the 19th as well as in the 18th century supplied Europe) and approved by Holderness, for a close alliance between herself, Austria, and Saxony-Poland; but the King's control over British foreign policy was already on the decline, and the project had to be shelved as out of date. The serious peril of isolation to which Great Britain was accordingly exposed, in view of the imminent outbreak of war with France in Europe, induced the Government of George II, with the King's concurrence and cooperation, to make overtures to Frederick II for a Prussian neutrality in

the event of an attack upon Hanover—and Frederick II was not the Prince to let such a chance escape him.

The extreme rapidity with which the Treaty of Westminster (as it is rather perversely called) of January 1756 was concluded is in itself an indication of the limits of its immediate significance. Although it was to prove a very important step towards the overthrow of the existing system of European Alliances, no such meaning was attached to it either in England, where hopes were actually entertained that it might come to form the basis of an Alliance with Austria and Russia as well as with Prussia, such as would in her turn completely isolate France, or by Frederick, whose object in quickly falling in with the proposal had been to seize the chance of a Silesian guarantee, besides, if possible, finding in it more or less of a safeguard against the ill-will of the Tsarina. But—and here we come to the critical stage of the argument—how was the news of this agreement received by France, and what was its effect upon the course of the negotiations between the actual directors of her policy and the Court of Vienna?

For, it must be remembered—and an attention to dates is very necessary in even the most cursory notice of these complicated transactions—the negotiations in question had been in active progress since September 1755, when Bernis and Starhemberg first met in Madame de Pompadour's château at Sèvres (she, however, taking no part in the conference). Nor was it until December that the Duc de Nivernais at last set forth on his mission—from which he had hoped so much but which he had delayed so long—to the Prussian

Court. Nivernais persisted, even after the unpalatable agreement had been made known to him in the form of a project, in pressing upon Frederick his proposal for a renewal of the defensive Treaty between France and Prussia, which had been concluded in 1741 and was on the point of expiring. It cannot be thought extraordinary that this accomplished statesman, whose mind was solely bent upon the terms of the arrangement, from the first regarded by him as the end and aim of his mission, should have viewed the "Treaty of Westminster" in the light of a manœuvre on Frederick's part towards securing the best terms possible from his undoubted ally. But it would be incomprehensible that he should have been left without a hint of the Austrian negotiations, were it not that the French Foreign Office in the person of its chief (Rouillé) was, in point of fact, itself little better informed as to their nature and progress. I am inclined to conclude that Frederick entertained no serious suspicion of their purport, although some rumours had reached his ears. Thus, a great share of the blame fastened by M. Waddington upon Frederick as having "mistaken the degree of susceptibility" in Lewis XV, or, in other words, insulted his sense of dignity, by keeping him in the dark as to the conclusion of a Treaty with the mortal foe of France, falls upon Lewis himself, if the transaction is to be judged in connexion with its consequences. For Nivernais had preventive as well as corrective opportunities during his familiar intercourse with Frederick at Potsdam; and, without a knowledge of the Austrian negotiations, so far as their drift was concerned, he could not even feel satisfied



as to the answer to the question he had asked at the outset of his own, *s'il convient de s'en tenir vis-à-vis du roi de Prusse à des assurances d'amitié?* True, he received his letters of recall at an early date, but he was expressly authorised to use them "either sooner or later," as the condition of his health might seem to render advisable.

When the news of the Treaty of Westminster actually arrived at Versailles a Council was held, in which, according to Knyphausen's information, all the members present, with the solitary exception of Belle-Isle, rejected Nivernais's proposal of a renewal of the Treaty with Prussia, while a considerable minority was in favour of the recall of the Ambassador from Berlin. The "susceptibility" of Rouillé and Sechelles, which thus brought them into line with the secret negotiations, may have been very acceptable to Starhemberg; but, inasmuch as three months, or thereabouts, were to intervene before the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, it is obvious that the French Government had time enough at its disposal for seeking to bring about a result approaching to that which, as Bernis afterwards declared, would have saved the situation, viz. a renunciation—or perhaps a modification—of the Treaty of Westminster by Frederick II. In other words, I venture to remain in doubt whether the announcement of this Treaty in France was the determining motive of the action of the cabal in whose hands lay the destinies of her policy. But this issue is a narrow one, and M. Waddington's exposition of the transactions which ensued is so clear and candid that his readers may be left to form their opinion on it for themselves.

## 24. THE OUTBREAK OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, October 27, 1866.)

THE invasion of Saxony in 1756 by Frederick the Great is no longer a dead precedent, though Prussia has not gratified historical students by continuing the parallel through another Seven Years' War. Yet she commenced action with undoubted fidelity to her favourite national traditions. The protest against the armaments of Austria which the injured innocence of Count Bismarck addressed last spring to the minor Courts must have been modelled upon the remonstrances of the Prussian Minister Klinggräf, at Vienna, in 1756, urged at a time when his Royal master was marching upon Dresden. It would perhaps be unprofitable to carry the parallel further back. Now that Prussia has won the day, she will not lack pens to justify a course which has ended in triumph. A century of writers has been busily engaged in proving that the wrath of Frederick the Great was justly founded on the fact that his hardly-won Briseis, Silesia, was to be torn from his embrace, and that this was not a mere pretext to conceal a deed of inexcusable violence.

To discuss these alternatives has, with most modern historians, been to adopt the former with unhesitating confidence, and contemptuously to wave the latter

<sup>1</sup> *Die Geheimnisse d. Sächs. Cabinets. Ende 1745 bis Ende 1756. Archivar. Vorstudien zur Gesch. d. siebenjähr. Krieges.* 2 Bde. Stuttgart. 1866.

aside. As in the case of the 'Thirty Years', so in that of the Seven Years', War, Northern Germany—i.e., in the latter instance, Prussia—has generally had the argument to herself. The cause of Frederick the Great, pleaded with sufficient skill and volubility by himself, has not suffered in the hands of Ranke and Preuss; and Mr Carlyle's advocacy of the Prussian case certainly loses nothing from lack of fervour. But this very redundancy of zeal not unnaturally arouses the suspicion of the more discriminating reader; and the vigour with which those who propound their case as irresistible abuse the stray supporters of the opposite side suggests an irrepressible doubt whether there may not, after all, be a hole in the armour which has been so long proclaimed perfect. Upon this hole the publication before us professes to lay a finger. A writer upon whom "considerations of a higher nature impose the obligation of anonymity," but who challenges the freest enquiry into the materials upon which he has founded his work, has collected from the Royal archives at Dresden a mass of evidence concerning the negotiations during the eleven years preceding the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. The Saxon Archives, as the author observes with undoubted truth, are open to the learned world; their arrangement is admirably lucid, and their director, Dr von Weber, is at hand as a cicerone of incomparable readiness and courtesy. There remains, accordingly, no doubt as to the genuineness of the documents upon which the writer endeavours to establish his case; and the only question is, how much or how little those documents may, to a candid mind, appear to prove.

The ordinary view of the causes leading to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, and justifying Frederick II in being nominally the first to draw the sword, is too familiarly known to need elaboration. It is fairly summed up by the anonymous writer as "the assertion that Frederick, in the year 1756, only took up arms in order to anticipate an offensive alliance against Prussia concluded by Austria and Russia—an assertion which forms the kernel of the Prussian version first given by Count Hertzberg in the *Mémoire Raisonné*, and subsequently repeated by Frederick himself in his historical writings." But the proof of this assertion, the writer continues, is wanting; and Frederick failed to find it in the Saxon Archives, which he broke open, and in part transported to Berlin, in the year 1756. Nor is a sufficient proof supplied, we may add, from the letters and despatches traitorously communicated to the Prussian Court, by bribed Saxon officials, in 1755. These "stolen pieces" Mr Carlyle declines to communicate, as being of abstruse tenor and likely to prove mere enigmas to his readers. But they contain, he asserts, "fatally undeniable" proof that the old Treaty of Warsaw for partitioning Prussia was still "kept vigorously alive underground," and that Saxony, Austria, and Russia were fixed on cutting down the King of Prussia "to the size of a Brandenburg Elector." And, in his own Memoirs of the Seven Years' War, Frederick II states that it was not merely on vague conjectures that the supposition of an identity of design between Austria, Russia, and Saxony was founded, but that the proofs of their evil scheme were in his hands; and that it would, therefore, have been an



unpardonable error to spare an ally of Austria who was only waiting for the moment at which he could openly declare himself on her side. To this apparently ingenuous plea of self-defence the anonymous enquirer, before entering into the question of facts, opposes, by way of introduction, a sufficiently startling extract from a later paper from Frederick's hand, entitled *Exposé du Gouvernement Prussien, des Principes sur lesquels il roule*, etc., evidently not intended for publication, and, in fact, not published till 1848, in Preuss' *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*. The salient passage, in which the anonymous writer finds a revelation of Frederick's designs in commencing the Seven Years' War by a *coup de main* against his neighbour, is the following:

S'il s'agit des vues politiques d'acquisition qui conviennent à cette monarchie, les états de la Saxe sont sans contredit ceux qui lui conviendraient le mieux, en l'arrondissant et lui formant une barrière par les montagnes qui séparent le Saxe de la Bohême, et qu'il faudrait fortifier. Il est difficile de prévoir comment cette acquisition pourrait se faire. La manière la plus sûre serait de conquérir la Bohême et la Moravie, et de les troquer avec la Saxe.... Cette acquisition est d'une nécessité indispensable pour donner à cet état la consistance dont il manque.

This document, written probably about ten years after the invasion of Saxony, of course proves nothing by itself; but we may allow that it helps to point our suspicions with some force in a particular direction. The additional circumstance, for the first time mentioned in the present work, that Winterfeldt, whom Frederick had in 1756 sent to reconnoitre the area of the coming War, had, on his way out, further reconnoitred the state of feeling in the Saxon army

at Dresden—which in his opinion “*une douce violence*” would suffice to force into the Prussian service—may also help to throw light upon the real objects of the *transitus innoxius* of Frederick through the Electorate. But it only comes at second hand through a Saxon pen, which in a subsequent letter plainly declared the writer’s belief that the annexation of Moravia and the Lusatias formed only the first instalment of the invader’s scheme. The anonymous editor, who understands the value of evidence, must be aware that neither his insinuations nor those of Frederick’s contemporaries amount to a proof of the Prussian King’s intention to incorporate a part or the whole of the Saxon Electorate. We therefore prefer to follow him to the more important part of his present volume, in which he, in our opinion, satisfactorily proves that no coalition against Prussia, no offensive alliances on the part of Austria, whether with France or with Russia, were in existence when Frederick II drew the sword, and that Saxony had not the faintest idea of the secret plans of the Austrian Chancellor Kaunitz when the War was commenced by the invasion of the Electorate. These statements, if proved, would constitute a direct confutation of the assertion of the Prussian King, in his memoirs of the Seven Years’ War:—“Vous verrez par les pièces justificatives annexées à ce chapitre, que le Roi de Pologne était un des plus zélés partisans de la conjuration que l’Impératrice-Reine avait formée contre la Prusse.”

The Treaty of St Petersburg of the year 1746 cannot in fairness be represented as other than a defensive treaty (so far as the relations of the contracting parties with Prussia were concerned) between Austria and

Russia, obviously called for by the then existing Franco-Prussian Alliance. This view of it is proved beyond doubt by the text of its fourth secret article, upon which the question turns. The article provides for a loyal adherence to the Peace of Dresden of December 1745 (thus surely, notwithstanding Mr Carlyle, rendering the so-called Treaty of Warsaw of May 1745 both virtually and absolutely defunct), and then proceeds to certain stipulations of mutual assistance in case, *against all hope and the common wish, that Peace should be first infringed by His Prussian Majesty*. No doubt, one of the objects of those unwearying efforts of Kaunitz to detach France from Prussia, and bring her over to the side of Austria which at last bore fruit in the Versailles Treaties of May 1, 1756, was to place the Empress in a position which might at a future time enable her to recover the province of which her Crown had been despoiled. But to grant this thought to have been present to the mind of the Chancellor is one thing, while it is another to urge the actual existence of a conspiracy between Austria and France as a justification for Frederick's violation of the Peace of the Empire. When Austria endeavoured to follow up the Versailles Treaties by a secret Treaty of Defensive Alliance with France, we find Lewis XV (in June, 1756) explicitly stating that one of his objects in acceding to these overtures is

de trouver dans un arrangement également utile à la Cour de Vienne et à la France, de nouvelles ressources pour tirer une juste satisfaction de l'Angleterre, sans que S. M. T. C. soit pour cela engagée ni obligée à agir offensivement contre le Roi de Prusse, ainsi qu'elle l'a constamment déclaré par ses plénipotentiaires.

In other words, as our author is justified in pronouncing, France would have nothing to say to an Offensive Alliance for the recovery of Silesia. The real Secret Treaty between France and Austria, which would have justified the proceedings of Frederick on this head, was, unfortunately for his apologists, concluded precisely one year later, on May the 1st, 1757. Nor was Russia, notwithstanding the declarations of "the august Russian sanhedrim" over whom Mr Carlyle makes merry, prepared, in her then disorganised state, for war against her energetic neighbour. So far was Frederick from anticipating, as he afterwards pretended, any attack from this quarter, that his Envoy at London officially declared the readiness of his master to allow the Russian troops destined for the protection of Hanover against the French to pass through Prussian territory, where quarters, and every facility for continuing their march, should be afforded them. And Count Brühl himself, who at that time (July, 1756) was trembling at the Prussian armaments, speaks of Russia's assistance in the coming War as more than doubtful, and mentions the attempts in which the Court of St James's was then engaged to reconcile her with the Prussian King. Upon the whole, it seems to be not saying too much to assert that Russia, like France, was only forced into an active alliance with Austria by the outbreak of that War of which Frederick's apologists attach the blame to all and any of the combatants in it except its beginner.

Readers of Mr Carlyle's book may remember a curious passage in which it is blandly stated that, on the very night on which Frederick had written to his brother and sister to announce his immediate departure for opening the campaign, "Answer comes from



Klinggräf," his Envoy at Vienna, "an answer almost worse than could have been expected. The 'League with Russia against you' is non-extant, a thing of your imagination." But the King was determined that his wish should retain its rights of paternity over his imagination, and marched.

As to the fate of Saxony herself, there can be little doubt that it was to some extent brought upon her by the policy of Brühl. It is certainly proved to demonstration, from a despatch of August 1, 1756, in which he disavowed the readiness of the Saxon Minister at Paris to enter into an alliance with France, that the Court of Dresden had decided upon maintaining an attitude of neutrality, or at least upon attempting to draw back from engagements which had never ripened to a conclusion. Unfortunately, however, a small State like Saxony cannot remain neutral; and Brühl's *finesse* proved a sorry shield against the fierce determination of the Prussian King. The Capitulation of Pirna is perhaps one of the most pitiable incidents in military history. It is told with circumstantial minuteness in the second volume of the present work, and suffices of itself to stamp Brühl with the character of the most imbecile and utterly selfish of royal favourites. His personal avarice had crippled the efficiency of the Saxon army; his stupidity allowed it to take up the fatal position near Pirna; his conceit arrogated to himself the direction of its "movements"—if the term can be used. The Austrians were at hand to effect the junction which would have saved the devoted band; but Brühl had rendered the latter practically unable to move across the Elbe. The King—personally in safety with his Minister (himself a General in the army) on the

Königstein—sent down an heroic message bidding his troops die, and excessively regretting that His Majesty was not in a position to share their fate. Nor were this contemptible Prince and his even more contemptible favourite content with this shameful proceeding. After they had been forced to consent to the capitulation, they actually sent round to the European Courts an *éclaircissement*, in which the responsibility of the act was thrown upon the Saxon generals, and allowed this document to be published in several German newspapers. In vain they afterwards attempted to shirk the fact that the King had thus publicly stigmatised his own officers, and deprived them of the only possession which Brühl and Frederick had left them—their honour.

On the remarks which close the second volume of this remarkable book, charity forbears to comment. They were only written a month or two ago; but how stale all political speculations appear which date from the spring and early summer of the present year! Saxony has suffered deeply and bitterly from the events of the last few months; but, when we contrast with these sufferings those which accompanied the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, we discern matter of consolation for the gallant little kingdom. It may have been brought to the verge of political extinction by the policy of its Sovereign and his busy Minister; but, at all events, the King has been true to the army which has been true to him. In her darkest hour Austria remembered the claims of a loyal and faithful ally; and Saxony has saved her political and military honour—a possession none the less dear to a State because that State is small and feeble, and doomed to die.

## 25. THE DECLINE OF PRUSSIA UNDER FREDERICK WILLIAM II<sup>1</sup>

(*Three Lectures*, 1891.)

### I

#### THE HEIR OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

THE present German Emperor, who claims by inheritance or otherwise the right divine of deciding where doctors differ, has of late instructed the instructors of a generation still younger than himself as to the more excellent way of educating his people. Teachers, he has ruled, shall lead their pupils by Gravelotte and Sedan to Marathon and Thermopylae, instead of urging them towards the goal from starting-points remote alike in time and place and methods of culture. And yet, according to whatever order of procedure the Schulpforta and the Joachimsthal of the future may acquire the national consciousness, and with it all the patriotic virtues, to which it is rightly designed to train their pupils, there are certain lessons likewise well fitted to be learnt by the future citizens of a modern State, which they will find in almost any chapter of their excellent history-books. These are lessons that repeat themselves in the records of ancient

<sup>1</sup> Three public lectures, delivered in the Victoria University, Manchester, on January 26th, February 2nd and February 9th, 1891, preceded a course of similar length, delivered in the same Term by the late Professor Robert Adamson, of which Lectures II and III, on "The Regeneration of Germany," reprinted in vol. II of his *Development of Modern Philosophy*, 2 vols., Blackwood and Sons, 1903.

and of modern world alike, although they may be written most broadly across the annals of States like the Prussian, genuine monarchies, whose form of government has not so much allowed as necessitated a powerful influence derived from the accidents of personal individuality. Beyond a doubt, this influence has not been omnipotent; at times, it has not even been paramount. Modern historians of the Prussian monarchy, and of the new Germany to which it has given birth, insist—and insist rightly—on the tenacity of those historical ideas and national tendencies, and of the institutions and administrative systems more or less successfully embodying them, which have victoriously asserted and reasserted themselves in the progress of the Prussian State in reign upon reign of the same venerated dynasty. But their narratives are far from obscuring the fact that all these influences, enduring as they have in many instances proved, have had to reckon with another likewise potent though shifting and at times incalculable influence—that of personality which is inseparable from the very essence of kingship. Such was the opinion, bluntly expressed, of the greatest of Prussian Kings, who, in his essay on the history of Brandenburg, put together at a period presumably but little affected either by the illusions of youth or by the disillusionment of old age, expressed himself as follows:

“In monarchies, the only basis of the form of government is the despotism of the sovereign: laws, army, trade, manufactures and all other branches of the State, are subject to the caprice of a single individual, who is followed by successors never resembling one another: whence it ordinarily follows that, at the accession of a new king, the State is governed on new



principles—which circumstance redounds to the prejudice of this form of government. In the objects that republics propose to themselves, and in the means they employ for securing them, there is unity; and, accordingly, they almost always achieve them; in monarchies, an ambitious Prince is followed by a do-nothing; and he by a saint; and he again by a soldier; and he by a scholar, and the scholar by one who abandons himself to self-indulgence; and, while this moving theatre of fortune presents a ceaseless succession of new scenes, the genius of the nation, distracted by their variety, is unable to arrive at a settlement. Wherefore,” he continues, adding to these rather gloomy reflexions a moral concealing a kind of consolation, “wherefore, in monarchies, those institutions which are to withstand the vicissitudes of centuries, ought to have roots so profound, that they cannot be torn up without destroying at the same time the most solid foundations of the Throne.”

In other words, if I rightly understand this most philosophical of despots, under a King, nothing is secure unless the security of the monarchy itself is bound up with it—an experience which some of the greatest national institutions have made in the Revolutions of England and France, and which, after a more fortunate fashion, the Prussian State itself was to verify in the dark days when its very existence was preserved by nothing but the loyalty of its dynasty.

In essaying, then, to sketch, within the narrow frame-work of three brief lectures, some of the more salient phenomena of the decline of Prussia after the death of Frederick the Great, I make no apology for attempting, in the first instance, to arrive at some conception of the personal character of his successor, by means of a sketch of his entire career. A more decorous method of treatment might perhaps have kept it in the background, at all events till the close;

and might very easily have begun by showing how neither the home government nor the foreign policy of Frederick William II, to each of which I propose to devote one of my subsequent lectures, was wanting in passages of intelligence and even of energy; while for some of the errors committed in both, as we shall not fail to observe, no candid judgment would be disposed to shift to the sovereign the share of responsibility chargeable to the ideas and "systems," as they were called, of his times. But in a genuine monarchy—unlike that across the water, where as we know King George could not exercise full authority even over the fish in his own pond in his own park—in a genuine monarchy, such as Prussia had become under the rule of Frederick the Great's father, and in still more complete measure under Frederick the Great himself, the influence of the King's personal character had come to count as the mainspring in the State-machine. On Frederick William II's accession, a counsellor whose advice was as copious as the dews from heaven—and sometimes seemed as cold next morning—Mirabeau, with whom we shall meet again more than once, besought the new King with pathetic eloquence not to govern too much. "*Pour vous, Sire, comme il vous convient de gouverner toujours bien, il est digne de vous de ne pas trop gouverner.*" Why, in the civil administration of the State, make a display of the authority of the King, when things can go on very well without him?

But, even had Frederick William, from the first and continuously—instead of only in moments of weak and intermittent disgust—obeyed this advice, not only

would the whole moral life of his people still have remained under the shadow of his Throne; but the mere reaction against the system of his predecessors, involved in such an abstention, would have been of the utmost significance for every department of the State. In an organised despotism, the non-intervention and the intervention of the sovereign, the rule of him who governs and that of him who refuses to govern, alike make themselves perceptible everywhere save in those parts of the body politic whence, as in the Roman Empire of old, often comes the regeneration through which, if they are to live, all societies must from time to time pass. As it was, I know of no reign in the history of the Prussian monarchy which more manifestly bears the impress both of the endeavours and of the failures of personal government than that which I have undertaken to review. The character of the reign, like the character of the king which it reflects, is somewhat too complicated to admit of being summarised in an epithet or two. A "dark physical man" Carlyle, in his inimitable way, calls the heir of Frederick the Great; nor will I say but that he might be labelled thus with comparative correctness in those psychological catalogues where second-rate men are wont to be glibly classified by quick-witted historians. For what there was in him of higher ideas and nobler aspirations was, as we shall see, fatally obscured by spiritual perversities to which he weakly surrendered himself, and by the lusts of the flesh, of which he might almost be said to have been born the slave. But such summary judgments fail to satisfy the conscience of true biographical enquiry—a branch of

historical research which I hold it a mistake to deem worthy only of pedants without grasp and literary ladies of limited experience. I have mentioned Carlyle, the value of whose own *Frederick the Great* is mainly biographical, and in its concluding volumes almost entirely so. Had he cared—or rather had he retained the creative strength which, as one reads his last great book, one can all but visibly perceive ebbing away from its author—what a picture he might have left us, in his earlier manner, of the life and character of Frederick's heir—how his fierce irony would have exulted in its mingled tragedy and comedy, as it proceeds towards its catastrophe of failure, hopeless and unmourned! Instead of such a portrait, all I can attempt is a candid analysis of a character and career in which, if there was nothing heroic, neither was there, as poor humanity goes, anything monstrous. Infirm as he was of moral texture and purpose, the chief curse on Frederick William II was that he was a King, called upon to have a will of his own and to mould the wills of other men.

Of his secondary misfortunes, one of the earliest was that the contrast which for good and for evil men will always draw between a sovereign and his successor—and which most sovereigns seem prone to draw between themselves and their successors, and *vice versa*—was in his case intensified by an inherited grudge of no ordinary kind against his uncle, Frederick the Great. Of the great King's brothers, with all of whom in the early years of his reign he was on good terms—for he never quarrelled without a reason—the



eldest, Augustus William, the Prince of Prussia, was especially distinguished by him. The King dedicated to this Prince his celebrated epic on the Art of War as well as his still more celebrated *aperçu* of the history of his dynasty from which I have already quoted, and, in the preface to the latter work, proclaimed to the world at large why he cherished so particular an affection for this his eldest brother and heir-presumptive, both as a friend and as a Prince. He presented him with the historic palace of Oranienburg, which had stood deserted since the splendid days of King Frederick I, and there was no brighter figure in the festivities here or at Court than the handsome Prince of Prussia, whose amiability, intelligence and courtesy won all hearts. But, early in the life and death struggle of the Seven Years' War, in which he, like all the Princes of his House, had drawn his sword once more for King and country, his fate overtook him. You remember how, after the disastrous battle of Collin in June 1757, King Frederick determined that his army should effect its retreat from Bohemia into Silesia in two divisions, and while of the one he retained the command in person, entrusted the conduct of the other to his brother the Prince of Prussia. Less skilful and less fortunate than the King, Augustus William failed to accomplish the task imposed upon him without losing a large number of men together with the whole of the baggage. When they met once more, the King humiliated the Prince by causing a message of the bitterest and most unsparing reproof to be delivered to him in the presence of his officers, while his sovereign himself stood close by to see that no word was left out. The disgrace and the

cruelty—as they seemed to him—of the procedure broke the high-spirited Prince's heart. The popular tradition which attributed to this cause his death at Oranienburg, a few months afterwards, is confirmed by more than one touching piece of evidence from a private source, and is likewise borne out by the peculiar cultus or devotion which Prince Henry, the great King's younger brother, afterwards paid to the memory of Augustus William. Prince Henry—who, as his life went on, matured a hatred of King Frederick II such as no other member of the royal House could have entertained without making himself ridiculous—in his later years erected a monument in his palace gardens at Rheinsberg to all the heroes of the Seven Years' War towards whom the King had shown disfavour or insufficient favour—and the place of honour on this strange monument was given to the medallion portrait of the unfortunate Augustus William. A nobler memorial of the fidelity of the attachment which he was capable of inspiring is probably known to some of my hearers. The brave lady who for the space of three score years and nine served the royal family of Prussia in prosperity and in adversity—in the glitter of Frederick II's reign and afterwards during the flight from Jena and in the snows of Memel—so served them because of the love she had borne towards Augustus William, from whose vicinity she had heroically torn herself in the far-off days before the last Silesian War. Thus it came about that, in Countess Voss, there survived a witness at once kindly and truthful, both to the criminal follies of the son and to the simple virtues of the grand-

children, of the Prince whose passion had blighted her life<sup>1</sup>.

By his father's death in 1758, Frederick William, now a boy of about fourteen, became Prince of Prussia and heir-presumptive to the throne. Though Mirabeau afterwards had the presumption to tell him "you have not been properly speaking educated; but, then, neither have you been spoilt"—there is no reason to suppose that his education was neglected by his uncle, who, both before and after the death of the boy's father, showed much solicitude on this head. We can readily believe, that though Frederick William acquired a satisfactory command of French, which language he both spoke and wrote with fluency, it was otherwise with his native German tongue, in the very orthography of which he never felt at home. This was due not so much to the fact that his tutor proper, Nicolas Beguelin, was a French Swiss, as to the predominant authority which French letters and learning continued to enjoy at the Prussian Court, so long as there was breath in the victor of Rossbach. It was in the latter part of 1780—at a time when, for better or for worse, his nephew's education was a thing absolved and done with—that Frederick the Great published his famous pamphlet on the insufficiencies of German literature, which stirred indignation or regrets far and near, and

<sup>1</sup> I have appended to the reprint of these lectures a review of the *Reminiscences of Countess Sophia Maria von Voss*. The portrait of Frederick William as "Hereditary Prince of Prussia," printed by that now obscure *chevalier de voyage*, "Prince Castriotto of Albania," in his *Œuvres Choiesies* (s.l., 1882), a small publication in the Cambridge University Library, calls itself "characteristic," but is merely rhapsodical.

tempted even Goethe to measure himself in literary controversy with the master of so many legions. Frederick the Great's diatribe in truth reduces itself to a misstatement of premises rather than a blunder in conclusions: he did not so much shut the door, even in his own conceit, against a German literature of the future, as persist in refusing to see that his own generation had already burst any such door open. As for his nephew, one is loth to say that the preference publicly manifested by him as King for German over French literature and art was merely one of his numerous manifestations of independence towards the sympathies and antipathies of his predecessor. It certainly found more satisfactory expression than the royal order, ridiculed by Mirabeau, that the rather unrestrained ballets which had hitherto attracted the fashionable world of Berlin to the French *spectacle* should henceforth, on certain days of the week, be performed at the national house. His early efforts, under Hertzberg's direction, to nationalise the Royal Academy at Berlin are quite pathetic in their laudable endeavour to place official laurels upon the patriarchal heads which had bared themselves before the cold sun of his uncle's glory; his services to music and other arts were, probably, the result of a genuine liberality of taste; and, whatever ridicule may attach to the slenderness of the results achieved under his patronage, not a little recoils upon the ineffable conceit of the good Berliners, who fancied themselves (a little too early in the history of the Intellectual city and the nation) the very centre and focus of the life of the German mind.

Nothing came of Frederick William's brief attempt



to pose as protector of the aspirations which his predecessor had so obstinately ignored. The antagonism to all true moral and intellectual freedom in which, as we shall see, he allowed himself to become involved was too radically opposed to the spirit of the young German literature to admit of his carrying on the pretence of a flirtation with it; and, in his latter days, the only intellectual influence retaining its hold upon him was one that caricatured the tone of the circles in which he had been brought up—his French reader and other emigrant *beaux-esprits*, who, in the days when German literature was already producing its classical masterpieces, diverted him with their smiles and sneers at its ineptitudes, such as had been in fashion at Sanssouci in the days of his youth.

But, to go back to those days for a moment longer, no matters of the sort could have more than slightly—if at all—affect the relations between uncle and nephew. The spiritual training of the Prince had been entrusted to a courtly divine and member, (unless I mistake) of a family of courtly divines, whose personal memory is not dishonoured by the conjecture that his religious teaching was writ upon water. For, in all probability, it was but a type of the mixture between perfectly reasonable theology and ethics based upon sentiment which was so familiar to the age, and so well suited for all sorts and conditions of men that had no war to wage against the world, the flesh and the devil. Frederick William very soon plunged into the midst of all the pleasures which opened their seductive arms towards him, and, though in the last year of the Seven Years' War he accompanied the King on his campaign, a

bitter antipathy had, to observant eyes, already announced itself between them. The Prince, uncommon tall of stature and possessed of a personal beauty which he inherited from his father, may, as is not uncommon with such Antinouses, by his person as well as by the doings for which he had already contrived to become notorious, have excited repugnance in his spare kinsman, whom self-control had taught the art of controlling others. In 1765, the usual remedy was applied by marrying him out of hand; but, while his union with the Brunswick Princess was dissoluble, and was actually dissolved just four years afterwards, another relation into which he had entered not long before his marriage outlasted both it and every other tie formed by him in the course of his unhappy career. This was his amour with Wilhelmina Enke, afterwards Mme. Rietz and finally Countess of Lichtenau—a personage whose portrait I will spare you, but who was certainly a woman of remarkable intelligence as well as tenacity of purpose, and extremely well worth banishing with a pension after the death of the King, over whom her influence had, in a sense, remained unbroken to the last. She afterwards received from Napoleon compensation for property taken from her by the Prussian Crown—not *vice versâ*—and died at Berlin several years later, in the odour of patriotic sentiments.

It was not this relation, which unhappily was regarded as quite in order by the perverted habits of the age, but the *vie crapuleuse* (as he called it) which, after a temporary restoration of friendliness between them, again estranged Frederick the Great from his

nephew. Frederick William, not a drinker or a gambler, was heavily in debt, and his credit at home being entirely at an end, and requests by him for secret loans at various foreign Courts having been refused, he had to borrow a large sum from an Amsterdam banker, which he honourably repaid, after he had come to the Throne. (Mirabeau sneers at him for paying his debts.)

In the War of the Bavarian Succession, however, he behaved so well that the King embraced him before the front and gave him his generality; and it was soon after this renewal of confidence that he was sent on a confidential mission to Russia, to prevent the conclusion of the Russo-Austrian alliance apprehended by Prussian policy. The mission failed, and the unlucky Prince, who was treated with unmistakable coldness by the mighty Tsarina, found himself, characteristically enough, obliged to borrow at St Petersburg a sum of 100,000 dollars, in order to maintain a decent appearance in that sumptuous capital. His uncle professed himself content on the Prince's return; but, before long, the old estrangement between them reasserted itself. Nor was it likely to be diminished by the fact, that in the last few years of the old King's reign an influence was gradually mastering the intellectual powers of his Heir, which may be described as antagonistic in its very essence to the spirit that had pervaded the life and labours of Frederick the Great. For who, among Kings and among men, had toiled harder for the welfare of the society in and over which he had found himself placed? And who had done so, in the language of his own last will, more avowedly "as a philosopher"—that is to say as one who recognises

both the existence of the problem of life and humanity's lack of the key that will unlock it?

Far otherwise to the enervated mind of his nephew, devoid neither of generous impulses nor (we may well believe) of repentant pangs, nor of that intermittent disgust at all unspiritual things of which none knows the whole nausea but he in whom self-knowledge is only the bitter aftergrowth of self-indulgence. And yet, having an inevitable sense of the greatness of the position to which he was born and of the great achievements that flattery assured him he was destined to perform in it, intelligent enough to find fault with many things as they were, and unaccustomed by any serious experience of business to appreciate the difficulty of public affairs, Frederick William was, at the same time, ambitious. In this twofold state of mind, ready for a slight tonic of moral chastisement, but still craving for the assurance that nothing hitherto done or left undone by him could militate against his destiny of being a great King—greater perhaps even than he the sands of whose days were already fast diminishing—Frederick William fell into the hands of the quacks.

Yes—of the quacks; for, though the general movement of the *Illuminati* with which he was brought into contact absorbed into it not a few high-minded, and maybe certain beneficent, impulses, and though, even among the Brethren of the Golden and Rosy Cross, into whose Lodge of the Three Keys he was at an early date admitted, there were probably some honest and honourable men—Bischoffswerder, who was the chief agent in effecting and maintaining the royal conversion, was, I incline to think, one of these—



yet the whole system of their perverted and distorted mysticism was, at bottom, a falsehood and an imposture. It is perfectly true, no doubt, that the fashion of secret orders and fraternities, founded upon that harmless love of mystery from which no age and no sex is altogether exempt, is in itself innocent enough, so long as it is left to collapse in its natural inanity: Frederick the Great himself in his youth, in the bright careless days of Rheinsberg, founded the Order of Bayard, and, after the Seven Years' War, belonged to the Secret Order of the Friends of their Country, who were assuredly the enemies of nobody. It has, on the other hand, been reasonably enough urged that, in the age of which we are speaking, and which was full of schemes and dreams for the improvement of society and the advancement of mankind as well as for the more vulgar prizes of everlasting wealth and health—that in this age, when open association, the very breath in the nostrils of a democratic age, was out of the question for any purpose, secret association was a resource too obvious not to be constantly in request. The Great Revolution had not yet sucked up into its own roaring inundation all these rills and rivulets, had not yet carried away half the world in ecstatic sympathy with its progress, and disenchanting the other with all progress whatsoever—thereby creating that modern type of conservatism which would have been altogether strange either to the monarchs or to the aristocracies of the middle of the 18th century. And it was a sentimental age besides—if only by way of reaction against the gospel of reasonable religion, which had so long pretended to appease the spiritual cravings of

humanity, and against the shallow wisdom of trying to explain away everything. This sentimentality, like all sentimentalities, loved the twilight of secrecy, where the confines are not too sharply marked between the senses and the emotions. Hence, as in ancient Boeotia the soil was cracked with fissures, whence, as from cavernous depths beneath, issued strange noises and exhalations conveying warnings full of indefinite discomfort, so in the earlier part of the last quarter of the 18th century Germany, and indeed almost the whole of Western Europe, was honeycombed with the fraternities of the new mysticism—a mysticism, unlike its nobler predecessors, only too often composed of smoke and noise, without any real force of fire, or any deep oracular significance, beneath.

These secret societies, into a sketch of whose natural history the present is not an occasion for entering, partly connected themselves with older growths of historic respectability, such as Freemasonry, partly assumed designations in which fiction and fraud had long had a proprietary share. For something like two centuries, astrological and alchymistical impostors had, from time to time, revived the name of the Rosicrucians—a society to which I should be loth to deny either an antique origin or a connexion, more or less direct, with some enthusiasts of real genius. But, in the days of Frederick William, Rosicrucianism had become the refuge of all sorts of crooked ambitions and obscure intrigues, to which the Jesuit propaganda of the times was probably not altogether a stranger. One of the agents of the Rosicrucians was, till his suicide in 1774, the notorious Schrepfer, to whose

exploits as a finder of hidden treasures, the High-German landlouser, Dousterswivel, makes appeal in Scott's *Antiquary*. He was on intimate terms with the spirit-world, and it was through him, in all probability, that a very different personage, Captain von Bischoffswerder, was received into the Order. This officer, who had re-entered the Prussian from the Saxon service, made the acquaintance of Prince Frederick William in the course of the brief and inglorious War of the Bavarian Succession (the so-called Potato War) of the year 1778; and, after the close of the campaign, he had nursed the Prince through a severe illness and (so it was said) cured him by a certain panacea which was one of the secrets of the Omniscient Order. Placed *à la suite* of the Prince, Major von Bischoffswerder now became his constant attendant and gained a strong—it would be too much to say a complete—ascendancy over him. He seems to have made himself very useful to the Prince, whom his uncle the King excluded from the knowledge of important public affairs, by obtaining information for him from the Ministers of State; but the secret of his influence lay far deeper and asserted itself with continuous strength. I do not profess to be able to read the riddle of such a character. He afterwards received from his royal patron certain moderate rewards for his fidelity—an estate for himself, and provisions of one kind or another for his kith and kin. But he never became very rich, and never held very high office; and at no point in his career did he show any exultation in his success, or even a wish to display his personal influence over his sovereign. A man apparently of sedate exterior and grave manners, he was, probably,

one of those fanatics who, without allowing any other purpose to interfere seriously with their course of action, address themselves, as it were, with perfect single-mindedness to their self-imposed mission. For there seems every reason to suppose that he believed in the illusions which he helped to create, and was impressed by his experiences in the blue grotto of his own park, where the spirits were wont to announce themselves by low mysterious songs and to answer the questions addressed to them by Frederick William.

Ought we to take the same view of the second and more noteworthy Rosicrucian, who was introduced by Bischoffswerder to the Prince, and of whose remarkable activity I shall have more to say in my second lecture? This was Wöllner, afterwards, under Frederick William II, leading Minister for Home Affairs. He had begun life as *candidatus theologiae*, holding (small blame to him) the moderate rationalistic views which were then the fashion at Halle and elsewhere; he had, like a virtuous tutor, married the sister of his pupil, a Silesian Count, and had, with an estate, acquired a notable knowledge of agricultural affairs. By his marriage, he had drawn upon himself the wrath of King Frederick II, whose notions as to class-distinctions were not to be trifled with; and he had, in return, cherished a resentment which was possibly among the determining motives of his subsequent career. The King's brother Prince Henry had, of course, been delighted to offer him an appointment in connexion with the management of his domains at Berlin. Thus, Wöllner had found his way into the society of the capital, where his literary ability was already known. Here, without abandoning liberal



or progressive views on many public subjects, he contrived, without violence, to effect his transition into the camp of the religious reaction, and joined the Rosicrucian Order. When under the influence of Bischoffswerder and Wöllner, Frederick William, about the year 1780, manifested a desire to enroll himself in it, he was admonished to make himself worthy of admission by a pure and virtuous life. About a twelvemonth afterwards, he was judged worthy and actually admitted; but Brother Ormesus, as he was called in the Order, proved a more interesting than obedient member. We need not scan too eagerly these mysteries: what seems clear is that Wöllner contrived to establish for so precious a member of the fraternity a *modus vivendi* which prevented the rupture of any of the personal relations cherished by him. But, though the admission of Frederick William into the Order had not proved capable of strengthening him against himself, it served the purpose of those who had accomplished it. Wöllner soon established himself as the confidential adviser of the Prince, who was every day found more ready to feed his soul on vows and promises. In the papers which this strange man composed for the guidance of the future sovereign, and which contained many both bold and useful suggestions of reforms, he was entreated to take pity and give back to the unhappy country the pure religion of the Lord. The promise was given, and thus, on the eve of his accession to the throne, Frederick William identified himself with what may be described as an ecclesiastical party in the State. This party had no longer, as might be supposed, any tender relations with Ultramontan-ism:

for Wöllner and the Order, while under his guidance, never showed the slightest intention of playing into the hands of the Roman propaganda. It was the party of reaction, within the limits of those Lutheran traditions which agreed so well with the approved methods of absolute government; and it sought to bring about the enforcement of pure doctrine together with an active superintendence of morals and manners, while setting up as exemplar for his subjects the (imperfectly) realised ideal of a faithful and pious King.

And now the crisis drew near. While Frederick William was, with "Platonic" approval (i.e. approval which need not translate itself into practice till to-morrow) perusing the unctuous exhortations of his future Minister, he was likewise engaged in the most serious intrigue of his life—as strange and uncomfortable a story as has ever escaped the eye of the sensation novelist. But on this you will not wish me to dilate. Public opinion at Berlin seems to have remained, for the most part, ignorant of the reactionary designs to which the Prince was inclining his ear, and careless as to the amour the monstrous "sanction" and the tragic end of which were to cast upon the private history of his now imminent reign the darkest shadows that rest upon it. The old King's reign had been long and his hand was hard. There was not a rank or profession which had not felt it: the nobility, whose privileges he upheld, but on condition that the first of these privileges should be a preferential claim to bear the burdens of the State; the Church, at which he gibed, and the Law, whose chiefs he rated and chastised like schoolboys; nay, the very officers of his army, who were kept up to

their duty by threats in black-and-white of a court-martial if they fell short of it. The people at large groaned under his *Regie*, a system of excise odious in itself and doubly odious as administered by his French agents. What, after so many years, did the indolent public reck of the services he had rendered, and was rendering, by his ceaseless activity in every department of State and his unflagging superintendence of them all? What did they care for his vigilance over public affairs at home and abroad, for an administrative activity which, even where it could not actually direct or correct, kept all men and all things on the alert, and a diplomatic intelligence which, at the very conclusion of his reign, achieved its political masterpiece, the countercheck given to Austria by the establishment of the *Fürstenbund*. "Feat, how obsolete now," wrote Carlyle, "fallen silent everywhere, except in German Parish-History, and to the students of Friedrich's character in old age!" A year or two after these words had been written, the *Fürstenbund* policy had been revived, and, *mutatis mutandis*, made to constitute the basis of the victorious German policy of Prussia! Soon enough after the death of Frederick the Great, men recalled the qualities which have, for all times, entitled him to the epithet so often misused by the admirers of Princes. But, in "practical" life, no greatness of past or present can contend against the overpowering sense of favours to come. Prince Henry, who, to be sure, had not much in the way of wasted affection towards his brother to repent, reconciled himself with his nephew, against whom he had had occasion for dissatisfaction; and, already, the

foremost statesman in the Prussian service, of whose policy I hope in my third lecture to attempt to formulate an estimate, had placed himself privately in communication with Frederick William. And not only had Hertzberg, with that liberal-mindedness which even diplomats are free to exhibit in what they pleasantly call "academical" essays, appealed to the good and great intentions of the coming King; but Karl August of Weimar, of all the German Princes the most loyal to the idea of a combination under Prussian headship, was in correspondence on the subject with the inheritor of the great King's last and not least fertile political idea. To men in general, the pleasant ways of Frederick William stood in agreeable contrast to the growing distrust of human folly and imbecility which marked the manners of the old lion at Sanssouci. You remember, perhaps, the surprise of the worthy handicraftsman from Saxony, the native land of the pleasant arts of peace where of old the grenadiers of Frederick had forced an admittance. He thought that he would find the conqueror of the Seven Years' War entrenched in a sort of permanent camp on the heights of Potsdam; but though Sanssouci was not a camp, it was a solitude<sup>1</sup>. And such, but for the stern sense of duty and the determination to perform the task of everyday, which sufficeth for man, was, also, the soul of the great

<sup>1</sup> "A royal residence, consisting of a small edifice built as no private person would build it, even if he were a *millionaire*, for provision is made for no convenience of life, no care, no desire; only a solitary monarch could live in it; and I wish I could describe to you the scenes of nature which I have witnessed up there, especially many a sunset." Alexander von Marwitz to Rahel (1811).



soldier and statesman dwelling within it. The end came; his task was over; and, amidst general jubilation, the new King ascended the throne.

A charming Prince, simple in his way of dress, though known to be generous of disposition; courteous in manner—substituting, for the military *Er* which the late King had thrown at old and young, great and small, alike, the insinuating *Sie* which to this day is the dream of those very humble classes and tender ages which are still denied it; grateful to those who had served him—down to the Jews, in whom he had been so frequently obliged to put his trust; magnanimous even to those from whom he had differed, including his wife, whom, on his advent to the throne, he placed in possession of a handsome revenue. What wonder that his path seemed likely to be on roses! A whole basketful was strewed on his path by the hand of the brilliant Frenchman who had resolved to take the new sovereign of Prussia and his monarchy under the special protection of his genius, having *tant soit peu* failed to impress the King's predecessor with the value of his genius—though, to do Mirabeau justice, he was great enough to recognise the greatness of the deceased hero, and to feel indignant at the general reception by the Prussian public of the news of Frederick's death, as if it had been the removal of a sort of incubus. "Such, then," he wrote in a passage of his quasi-official reports from Berlin which he afterwards, on their publication, thought fit to suppress, "such, then, is the result of so many battles won and so much glory—of a reign which has lasted for half-a-century and is filled with great deeds." But, at present, his attentions were necessarily

all for the rising sun. His *Lettre remise à F. G. Roi régnant de Prusse, le jour de son avènement au trône* was a personal homage presented by a sojourner who could hardly have foreseen his own later description of the decline of the same sovereign. But Mirabeau was tired of both Prussia and her King, when he wrote of the latter, "*L'homme est jugé*<sup>1</sup>."

## II

## THE PRUSSIAN STATE UNDER FREDERICK WILLIAM II

ALL of us—alas!—know only too well what is meant by the decline or decay of an individual man, whether it be the result of Nature's gradual and, so far, kindly processes, or whether it be hastened and rendered thereby more pitiable or appalling by inborn infirmity, by artificiality of life, by any of the thousand forms of self-indulgence or excess. We understand this, because we are familiar alike with the signs of vitality of body and of mind, and with those that betray the diminution or loss of it, in our fellow-creatures. When, however, we are called upon to diagnose, not an individual, be he sovereign or subject, but a whole State—a body politic in whose case its own members differ as to the purposes for which it exists and as to the methods whereby those purposes can be achieved—it is not so easy to prove or disprove the beginning or the progress of decline. It will, therefore, be safest in each instance to attempt to ascertain what have been, or are, in any particular State the characteristic marks of

<sup>1</sup> See *Histoire Secrète*, vol. II. p. 137.

vigorous life possessed by it, and to test by the measure in which those marks have become weakened or effaced the advance of decay and dissolution in the growth which they distinguished.

The Prussia of which Frederick William II in the year 1787 assumed what seemed to him the belated inheritance, had, as you know, been far from welded into a compact unity even by the last and greatest of his predecessors. The kingdom of the long frontiers it used to be called, and its far-stretching boundary-line could not be said to encircle populations, separated off as a national State by traditions of descent, language, religion or civilisation common to themselves but distinct from those of all other States. The place of these traditions had to be supplied by those of a common history of common efforts made in times of peace, and of common struggles waged in seasons of conflict such as most surely test the strength of young communities. No doubt, although it is idle to talk of a foresight of their great historic future having animated the endeavours of either rulers or people, there had been occasions in the history of the margrave which was to form the nucleus of the future Prussian State—occasions earlier even than the advent of the Hohenzollerns—when it seemed on the eve of playing an important part in the history of the Empire and of northern Europe. But these occasions passed away again, as did the promise of a strong government at home, and of an effective influence, in the direction of reform and progress, on the affairs of Church and State in the Empire at large, which accompanied the actual establishment of the Hohenzollern dynasty. The

signs grew fainter again which had already shown themselves of a consolidation of administrative authority; towards the great movement of the Reformation the attitude of Brandenburg was hesitating and uncertain; and, in the absence of any vigour of domestic government or definite scheme of foreign policy, there seemed every prospect that the electorate would continue to play the petty part to which it seemed doomed by the poverty of its natural resources. The great acquisitions of the early years of the 17th century offered opportunities unprecedented in extent and significance; Brandenburg was now united with East Prussia, part of the secularised territories of the German Order, as well as with a portion of the Rhenish duchies which had so long lain as an apple of discord between the representative Powers of Catholic and Protestant Europe. The State now comprehended provinces on the western, and beyond the eastern, mark of the Empire and a Calvinist Prince numbered among his subjects adherents of each of its three contending Churches. More imperatively than ever, the necessity seemed to declare itself that, if such a State was to prosper, nay if it was to survive, this result must be secured by a consistent enforcement of demands imposed by the conditions of its existence. Its administration must be strong and centralised and supported by a self-sacrificing and frugal population; its means of self-defence must be trustworthy and enduring, and not wasted upon objects with which the interests of the State had no direct concern; finally, its internal cohesion must be maintained against the disintegrating forces of the religious conflict which was threatening to overwhelm



western Europe. But, under a weak Prince (George William) and a Minister who read the signs of the times backwards (Schwarzenberg), Brandenburg-Prussia, when the storm broke out, barely contrived to save itself from destruction; the mastery of northern Europe seemed left to the neighbours west and north, Frenchmen and Swedes; and, though the State issued forth from the 'Thirty Years' War with certain accessions of territory, the Pomeranian inheritance and the spoils of some of the Saxon bishoprics—its composition seemed more heterogeneous, its interests more inconsistent with one another, and its destinies more uncertain, than ever.

But, at last, a definite system of government and policy, adapted to the peculiar needs of the State and circumstances of the population, and pursuing these needs with steady purpose, makes itself distinctly perceptible in the history of Brandenburg-Prussia. In his foreign policy, true to itself notwithstanding its apparent changefulness, the Great Elector had in view solely the security of his territories and his right to uphold their interests, and his honour as their sovereign, in the face of the contending Powers—Poles, Swedes and French—who were untroubled by any scruples about removing or ignoring his landmarks. At home, his government was successful in overthrowing, in a large measure, the authority of his Provincial Estates, and in introducing a permanent system of taxation and a standing army. Both these institutions were, as you know, in those days regarded—and not only by the subjects of the Great Elector—as allowable only under the pressure of exceptional circumstances: in Branden-

burg-Prussia, they were thus early established as indispensable conditions of the life of the State, and, paradoxically enough, the standing army, by reason of the pecuniary sacrifices which its existence imposed, impressed upon the people the principle of self-defence, which lies at the root of the system of general conscription. But this method of government likewise promoted in the State a more generous tendency to unity and cohesion. The fugitives from religious persecution—whether Christians or Jews, and whether sufferers from the tender mercies of the House of Habsburg or of the House of Bourbon—found a welcome here, liberty of conscience being thus proclaimed as a principle from which this State, where all the great confessional elements had been blended, could not swerve without violating what seems almost a law of its being. In this respect at least, the Great Elector was loyally followed by his son and their subsequent successors; and the foreign immigration, encouraged to such an extent by the colonising endeavours of Frederick the Great as to constitute, in the end, something like one-third of the whole population of the kingdom, not only provided the State with an invaluable accession of loyal and intelligent citizens, but bound the monarchy to a cause from which it could not henceforth be dissociated without dishonour.

Thus, passing by the reign of the first King of Prussia which in some, but by no means in all, respects interrupted the process I am now attempting to indicate, the principles of public life and government definitely established in the reigns of Frederick William I and Frederick the Great—the principles of a vigorous civil

and especially financial administration, of a strong and well-organised army, and of a liberty of conscience which compensated for the curtailment of many other liberties—had not been arbitrarily laid down by the sovereigns in question, but had been gradually, and by the operation of historical forces, implanted and, so to speak, fostered in the soil. I cannot here pause to point out the steps whereby a civil administration was called into life, which, to all intents and purposes, superseded, where it did not effectively subordinate, the provincial and municipal administrative systems, and proved itself capable of resisting the pressure of class - privileges and of overcoming class - interests. Although the organisation was not satisfactorily completed in its highest sphere—the relations between Ministers and King, over which, as you know, the first attempts at reorganising the Prussian State broke down in the days of Frederick William III and Stein—yet, in the main, a centralisation was effected such as was at this period unknown to any other continental State. At the same time, an official class was called into life, which by its loyalty, application and insight, became a fitting depository of the best traditions of Prussian government. Its ranks now began to be largely filled by the nobility, who had not habitually served in the army before the days of the Elector. This class, then, comprised a very large proportion of the educated intelligence of the country; but, in official life more than anywhere else, they were now brought into contact with the best-trained among the other elements of the population. The army at large was established on the basis of universal service by the so-called Cantonment

regulations of 1733; and, though the exceptions to the rule of service were so many that the burden of it fell, as a matter of fact, upon the shoulders of the peasantry, yet these exceptions were technically treated as such and not as the rule; while the increase of taxation occasioned by the military expenditure, upon recruits brought in from all parts of Germany, in itself entailed a most onerous self-sacrifice. The people at large were becoming accustomed to bearing, in one form or another, their share of the burdens of the State, which, as in the later days of Frederick the Great, weighed heavily upon them even in times of peace, but were, at least, never arbitrarily or suddenly imposed. The lowest class—the very peasants bound to the soil—were encouraged by the consciousness that their condition was a subject of solicitude to their rulers—"the kings of the beggars" was a title of which the Prussian Kings, as Treitschke says, could afford to swallow the satire; and there can have been few among the comparative failures which chequered the progress of Frederick the Great's later years that were more vexatious to him than his inability to bring about a more than nominal emancipation of the serfs. On the other hand, we may safely assert that, in the increasing area of population where education and spiritual refinement had called forth a desire for higher things than the daily bread of life, the two main gifts which the citizens of the State were conscious of having received from it were more and more thoroughly appreciated. These were a religious freedom, protected by justice impartial beyond cavil and prized more dearly than ever in an age which revolted against any kind of spiritual fetters, and, again,



the sense of membership of a State capable of holding its own among the nations of the civilised world. I need not here pause to enquire in what measure this latter sense had been developed in a new direction by the growth of a national German patriotism, which Frederick's victories largely contributed to foster, but which had a different and independent origin from the signs and tokens we have been discussing.

Now, in my first lecture, at the risk of seeming to give up a disproportionately large share of our time to a merely secondary cause of the historical result which I have undertaken to describe, I tried to show how Frederick William II broke down by reason of his character and training as the heir of purely and genuinely monarchical traditions. It was a well-known saying of Frederick William I, who as you remember trusted that the monarchy left by him to his son was founded on a rock of iron (*rocher de bronze*), that sovereigns are born for work. To that son, Frederick the Great himself, there spoke, with a voice louder than that of the Law and the Prophets, the doctrine that the King is the first servant of the State, and that his duties and responsibilities exceed those of his subjects even as their station is outshone by his throne. To demands like these, a nature and a depraved manhood such as Frederick William II's were unequal. He was, as I have said, devoid neither of generous impulses nor of felicitous ideas; he had a humane and sympathetic disposition, and a wider sphere of intellectual interests than many of his predecessors and some of his successors; he had, moreover, the instincts of a soldier and some of the chivalrous promptitude of action which

they inspire; and we can understand why Immanuel Kant, who himself suffered persecution under Frederick William II's government, should have pronounced him, "putting aside certain peculiarities of temperament, a thoroughly excellent Prince." But, even if we allow all this, and even if we assent to the judgment of Stein, that "a great part of the errors of this reign ought to be ascribed to the nation, which cringed at once and without reserve before the new King's minions and mistresses," we may marvel at the blindness which failed to understand the process that had made the Prussian State what it was at the death of Frederick the Great, and to understand what elements in it were indispensable to the welfare of the monarchy, and what features most dearly cherished by its people.

In the first place, the administration of the State—in which during the last two reigns had lain so great a part of its strength—rapidly fell out of gear in the new reign. Frederick William II speedily perceived that it was not in his power to direct all the departments of the State from his cabinet, as his predecessor had done: such powers of work are not at the command of every man, and such habits of work are not acquired through a few pious wishes. Early in his reign, he restored to the so-called General Directory or Collective Ministry the function of deciding on the proposals of Departmental Ministers, leaving only those matters to be referred to the King on which there had been found to be essential difference of opinion. But, in the first place, the General Directory had grown unwieldy with the growth and multiplication of the administrative Departments, and little real gain accrued from this

return to an arrangement now really out of date. Its immediate effect seems to have been to impair the efficiency and self-reliance of the Departments. In the second place, no approximation to any real system of Ministerial responsibility could take place so long as the King had a separate clique of confidential advisers of his own, and by their advice arbitrarily dismissed individual Ministers. Thus the administration proved inadequate both to its old tasks and to its new. Among the latter, I will only in passing instance the organisation of the new Polish territories acquired in the latter part of the reign, which was carried out with an incompleteness presenting a marked contrast to the energy and success of Frederick the Great's settlement of the administration of his new Silesian province. One of the tasks inherited from the preceding reign, was the progressive improvement of the conditions of the peasantry, for which so much, if not everything, remained to be done. The landowner or the farmer of the State domains took from the peasant the best of the labour of which his body was capable, and the State, besides pressing him into its military service, by its taxation deprived him of the chief part of his miserable savings. Yet, except by the incidental correction of some specially salient wrong, little or nothing was done, by administration or by legislation, to remedy this condition of things. The reforms contemplated or begun in the previous reign were only carried into execution when, as in the case of the promulgation of the judicial code, nothing remained but to place the royal *imprimatur* upon the completed work, spoiling the text a little in the proof-sheets.

Let us, if you please, by way of a rather more detailed illustration of the system of government in this period of decline, turn our attention, in the first instance, to its financial side. In this department of administration, in which the Hohenzollerns had usually taken as keen and personal an interest as that displayed in revenue matters by our own Tudors, we observe under Frederick William II a fatal oscillation between progressive ideas and halting action. The comparison reminds one of the famous antithesis drawn by Bacon for the benefit of King James I of the demands made upon him and upon his celibate predecessor; but it should perhaps be said, in justice to Frederick William II, that there has been much exaggeration in the charges of prodigal wastefulness brought against him. He was selfish, no doubt, in much of his expenditure, and lavished considerable sums upon unworthy personages; on the other hand, he exhibited a liberality neither reckless nor uncalled-for towards native literature and art, and showed good sense as well as kindness in using his best endeavours to raise, where possible, the salaries of the servants of the State, which Frederick the Great had rigorously kept down to starvation point. The only gross financial abuse of which he is to be held guilty belongs to the close of his reign, and connects itself with the royal domains acquired in large quantities, in consequence of the annexations of Polish territory at the time of the Third Partition of Poland, in 1795. A number of the estates in question were encumbered for the sake of undeserving supplicants, or pointblank given away to them; and, finally, under the patronage of the Minister Count



Hagen, a vast swindling operation was set on foot, by which Polish Crown-estates were, on absurd pretexts and at ridiculously low prices, sold to private persons. A loss was thus, with the King's assent, inflicted on the Crown of something like a million of our money. Inasmuch as not a few both of the highest officials of the State, and of personal followers of the King, were benefited by this ugly scandal, he is not to be acquitted of criminal laxity in having allowed it to proceed unhindered. But what I have at present in view is less exceptional sins of abuse than a general infirmity of policy.

The first financial measure of the reign, which the King announced to his subjects a few days after his accession to the throne, was wellmeant and hailed with universal delight. No part of the administration in the latter years of Frederick the Great's reign had been so unpopular as the so-called French *Regie*, i.e. the administration of the indirect taxes as a special department of finance by French officers, in whose experience and sagacity it pleased the King to put his trust. Almost equally unpopular (a wellknown anecdote will occur to you in illustration) was the Government monopoly of tobacco and coffee, which had interfered very materially with the cultivation of the former article, a staple product, then as now, of north-German agriculture. Still, these monopolies had produced to the State a yearly profit of something like a quarter of a million sterling, that is to say, about the eleventh part of the total net receipts of the State. With a poor and frugal people, already heavily taxed in relation to its powers, it was not easy to find a substitute for a

resource thus munificently thrown overboard; and yet these concessions were intended to be but the beginnings of a more comprehensive reform in the direction of that Free Trade which Mirabeau had so eloquently commended to the King. A Commission was rapidly named under an incompetent head, who speedily proposed and speedily withdrew a plan of direct taxation (graduated according to classes), for which, whatever may have been its intrinsic correctness, nobody was prepared, and which nobody approved. The consequences were a quarrel between the Commissioner and the Minister ordinarily charged with the management of taxes and manufactures, the resignation of the Minister, the abandonment of the direct taxation scheme, and, as the result of the reform which had disorganised the administration, an increase of taxation of beet-sugar and bread, in order to make up for the loss on coffee and tobacco. It remains to add that, towards the close of the King's reign—in 1797—the tobacco monopoly, which had been abolished with general applause, was reintroduced, without the additional taxes that had been imposed at the time of the abolition being taken off again. The reintroduction of the monopoly led, in one of the chief mercantile towns of the kingdom (Danzig), to open resistance, which was supported, first by the local and then by the provincial authorities, and had to be repressed by a royal rescript, publishing to the kingdom at large an administrative conflict such as had been unknown in the Prussian official world for many a generation.

I have sketched the history of this illstarred reform, in order to give some concrete notion of the

unfortunate vacillation of the financial policy which succeeded the system consistently followed under Frederick the Great. Had I time, I might illustrate the same experience from an even more striking example—the treatment applied to the corn-trade, which, in the beginning of the reign, it was attempted to set free, while, not more than two years later, a total prohibition of the export of corn directly reversed this liberal policy. As a matter of fact, adherents to the new economical doctrines which Mirabeau had commended to the new Government, rubbed shoulders, among the financial advisers of the King, with such staunch advocates of the mercantile system as the Rosicrucian Beyer, that the result was a conflict of policies which destroyed all unity of action even in the Administration. The protectionist theories of Frederick William II's predecessor, it may be added, were, doubtless, open to question; but the ubiquitous zeal and vigilance with which, by gifts and loans and such other encouragements as were within his power, Frederick the Great (in the later years of his life in particular) subsidised the opening of new, or the development of existing, lines of industrial activity are beyond all praise. No province of his monarchy was too remote, and no industry too obscure, for him not to help where help seemed possible or desirable. The new reign, in which, though there was no crying extravagance, yet there was much expenditure upon worse than worthless objects favoured by the King, had no money to spare except in quite insignificant sums for the encouragement of native industries. Thus, the end was that (other influences no doubt cooperating

—among them our British Wars in the Old World and the New, and consequent establishment of protected industries among ourselves) these went backward, both in town and country, alike the main industries of whole provinces such as linen and wool and the many small industries which found their market in a capital such as Berlin was gradually becoming. Moreover, the age was too clever by half to put up with the tentative endeavours of Frederick William II to raise new industries. So, for instance, with the culture of silk, which had already made considerable progress under him and was afterwards successfully resumed. The age of Frederick William II had nothing but contempt for these efforts, and all but pulled up the mulberry-trees planted in the great King's reign.

The general history of the Prussian budgets in the years after Frederick the Great shows a steady change for the worse. The receipts diminished, though not alarmingly; the expenditure increased, even apart from the extraordinary expenditure in the years of war, at a far more rapid rate; and, very soon, resort was had to the *Trésor* or Reserve Fund. This, Frederick the Great had constantly kept up; but under the new reign it was only very intermittently augmented, and in the end completely exhausted. No doubt, the greater part of the large sums which the Government of Frederick William II took from the Reserve Fund was devoted to the extraordinary expenditure of his Wars or preparations for Wars, and it had all been spent, when, for want of funds as well as want of spirit, Prussia concluded the Peace of Bâle; but it could easily be shown that large sums had been spent



on other purposes. Nothing could more effectually impair the success of the ablest financier—and there were some financiers of great ability in the King's service—than haphazard outgoings of this sort. Moreover, while no Minister was entitled to expend any sum exceeding 100 dollars that had not been enumerated in this annual budget without express royal authorisation, the King had at his command a separate purse, called the *caisse à disposition* or *Dispositionskasse*. This fund, which owed its origin to the unwillingness of Frederick the Great to allow any Minister or other official to control the action of the King in any matter whatsoever by becoming aware of his intentions without his consent, at the time of his death commanded an income, from various regularly assigned sources, of nearly a million and a quarter sterling. This was, as I have said, entirely removed from Ministerial supervision or control, and the expenditure from it, whether for public or private ends, was completely within the discretion of the King, or, of course, of the confidential Minister or agent whom he entrusted with its management. At a very early period in his reign, Frederick William II selected for the purpose the man of the violet velvet book, the keeper of his conscience as well as of his privy purse, his Minister Wöllner, of the sources of whose personal influence I gave some account in my first lecture. An attempt on the part of one of the other Ministers to extort from the King's private fund an unaccustomed contribution to the national exchequer was peremptorily rejected; and, foiled in this as in other attempts to make himself serviceable, the unhappy Minister in question took his

own life—a tragic enough episode in the history of the officialism of the time.

The mention of Wöllner's fatal name naturally suggests another series of transactions in this reign on which it seems, from our point of view, requisite to dwell; for of the decline of the military administration I will speak last, before passing in our third lecture to questions of foreign policy. Nothing in this reign, then, brought the Government into so much disrepute with the educated and intelligent among its subjects, and nothing gave so severe a shock to the respect which authority had hitherto commanded, as the campaign carried on by the religious Reaction under the guidance of Wöllner, by means of weapons supplied by the power of the State. I say advisedly, the campaign carried on by the Reaction, without specifying too precisely the adversary against whom that campaign was directed. For, on the one hand, reactionary as well as revolutionary movements are often ignorant of the point at which they will have to stop, or at which, for that matter, they intend to stop; and, on the other hand, it would be unjust to the Reaction directed by Wöllner to assume that it was merely provoked by so transient an episode as the *Aufklärung* movement represented by Nicolai and his Berlin associates. I have already stated my impression that Wöllner's motives were far from pure, and that, though the hatred which he drew down on his head has of late, in certain quarters, caused something like a revulsion in his favour, he has on the whole been fairly judged by the popular verdict. But the Reaction itself was the inevitable consequence of an untenable condition of

things which, sooner or later, must have come to an end; the pity of it was that the attempt was made to repress license by tyranny.

I am not concerned here to say anything about the origin and history of the popular philosophy which, in the age of Frederick the Great, had taken possession of the minds of lay and learned alike. By the end of his reign, the results were overripe. With the open, and indeed rather ostentatious, approval of the great King, even professed ecclesiastics and theologians pronounced dogmatic teaching supererogatory, and declared themselves content to find the essence of religion in conduct, in a moral condition of the mind pleasing to the Supreme Being, and necessarily declaring itself in works acceptable to Him. Such, for instance, were the views of all the members of the Upper Consistory at Berlin, the chief Protestant ecclesiastical authority in the monarchy; and such were, in an even more pronounced degree, the opinions of Baron Zedlitz, the Minister who, during the last seventeen years, or thereabouts, of the great King's reign lost no opportunity in the administration of Church and schools and universities, of proving himself a convinced pupil of Christian Wolff. No more loyal servant of the Crown existed than Zedlitz, as Frederick the Great himself acknowledged by allowing his Minister to protest against the royal proceedings on a memorable occasion. To popularity he was indifferent—like a true Prussian official, he was really happier without it than with it; and no opposing wave of irate zeal diverted him from his path. There can be no doubt that, under the shadow of such an influence, the

high places in the Protestant Churches as well as the theological Chairs in the national universities had come to be filled by men who either ignored or deliberately impugned the positive forms of religion; and in this fact itself there was much that could not but be offensive to pious souls. Nor is it to be wondered at, either, that the outrageous laxity of life, which in this age was spreading from the higher into the middle classes of society, should have been attributed, even by unprejudiced observers, to the withdrawal of an accustomed anchorage of faith, or that the political and social changes announcing themselves in France should have been loosely connected by conservative minds with the opinions and the manners that had already crossed the Rhine. I need not criticise these notions, in which there was much error, mixed with some grains of truth.

How often has a similar confusion prevailed on analogous occasions, above all when worse confounded in many minds by an undefined terror, such as, together with still more potent undefined sympathies, the imminence of the great French Revolution inspired. My point is, simply, that the Reaction of which Wöllner and others constituted themselves the leaders is, in itself, to be largely explained by very obvious considerations, and is largely attributable to motives free from any suspicion of corruption. Similar movements preceded it, or were nearly contemporary with it, under other German Governments both Catholic and Protestant—in Württemberg, in Saxony, in Hanover and elsewhere—though in Prussia alone this new Counter-reformation attained to proportions of more



than transitory significance. But all these considerations neither justify the length to which the Reaction was here carried, nor ennoble the motives which actuated Wöllner and some of his chief coadjutors. Of these—apart from Bischoffswerder—the most notorious was the elder Hermes (the brother of the author of *Sophia's Journey*). The third in this triumvirate of theologians was the Rosicrucian G. F. Hillmer. The indictment against the directors of the Reaction was founded on a special enquiry into the history of their careers, and from this I fear they cannot be held to have issued unscathed.

Operations were commenced early in the reign; but it was not till the spring of 1788 that advantage was taken of an educational dispute in Silesia, in the course of which Zedlitz had been vehemently denounced by a partizan of the Reaction, to set in motion the machinery whereby it was hoped to bring the King into play. To get rid of Zedlitz and to put in his place Wöllner—the *Numen* or veiled prophet, unless all indications are deceptive, of the Rosicrucian Order—it was worth invoking the cooperation of that Order itself. Bischoffswerder and Beyer, the Cabinet Minister already mentioned and likewise an active member of the Order, eagerly proffered their assistance; and Wöllner addressed a letter to the King, in which he assured him that the eternal welfare of millions of immortal souls was in question, and that the time had come for treating this all-important matter of religion, which had for twenty years been mismanaged by Zedlitz *en souverain*, as a concern of the Order. The King was entreated to confer on this subject—the reorganisation, in a word,

of Church and Education in the kingdom—with brothers Fargerus and Ocarus, of whom the latter is supposed to have been Beyer, and the former certainly was Bischoffswerder. He was entreated to place before them the violet velvet book, composed by Wöllner himself before the beginning of the present reign, and, in consultation with them, to arrive at conclusions on its recommendations. Brother Ormesus Magnus—that is to say, the King—would not fail to recognise the services of the Order, in having advised a course of action so favourable to the good cause, and to the advancement of the true faith. The scheme succeeded, and, three months later, Wöllner found himself named Minister of State, charged with the department of Justice and, at the same time, by a special manifestation of the royal confidence created Chief of the Religious Department in all matters of the Lutheran Church and Education.

Wöllner, whose object was, not to conceal his hand, but to show it, signalised his accession to power by restoring to the ecclesiastical authorities the supreme control over the examinations of school teachers—in other words the choice of these—of which Zedlitz had deprived them. But this was merely a premonition. Within a few months—in July 1788—the memorable Edict of Religion made its appearance, which contained, not indeed the full programme of the Reaction—for, as we shall see, more remained behind—but enough of it to spread consternation far and near. No doubt, the generalities of this Edict, its censures of the license which the clergy had hitherto so largely permitted itself and of the effects of that license upon the popular

mind, contained some things both reasonable and true. But, apart from the Caesaropapism implied in the King's nominal authorship of such an ordinance—apart from the grotesqueness of the revival of that worst abnormality of the Reformation age—a secular Prince (and even loyal lips could hardly fail to add beneath their breath, “*such* a secular Prince!”) taking the place of Pope and General Council—the demands made in the Edict were carried to a wholly unwarrantable length, and extended in quite unwonted directions. The declamation against the spread of the miserable, long-since refuted, errors of the Socinians, Deists, Naturalists and other sects, disguised under the much-abused name of the *Aufklärung*, has a foolish sound; but in the King's announcement of his resolution to rid his lands of these pernicious influences there was something more than harmless swagger. For not only (which was a comparatively bearable injunction) were both Lutherans and Calvinists ordered to use their ancient liturgies and forms of worship, introducing into them no alterations whatever except in the case of pure archaisms of expression: but, by a single stroke of the pen, the present was carried back into the past—a past not too remote to be quite forgotten, though remote enough from the spiritual advance which a century had effected. In a word, the Symbolical Books of the particular Confessions were, in this last quarter of the 18th century, declared the norm that was to regulate all preaching and teaching in the realm; and thus a direct contradiction was offered to the idea of union between the Protestant Churches which, after it had been the dream of Leibniz and other great minds, had

become an established principle in the policy of the Prussian Government. But more than this. An attempt to bind down the Churches by bonds to which they had long been unused might seem a daring defiance to the spirit of the age which had scaled so many of their outer walls; but what was to be said of the endeavour of this Edict to impose upon *all* the subjects of the Crown a constraint irreconcilable with moral freedom? The King graciously undertook to maintain the toleration of all sects hitherto tolerated in the Prussian States—the list was a very short one and included in addition to the three established Confessions, the Herrnhuters, Mennonites, Bohemian Brethren and Jews—provided that the conventicles of other sects remained strictly prohibited; and he promised not to do the slightest violence at any time to the conscience of any man, provided always that everyone peacefully did his duty as a citizen of the State, while keeping his own particular opinions to himself (*seine jedesmalige besondere Meinung aber für sich behält*), and took great care not to spread it or persuade others of it, and thus interfere with, or disturb their faith.

In tone as in substance, this Edict was unparalleled by any subsequent effort of the reactionary Government; and there can be little doubt that much of it was a direct transcript of the instructions for the Ministers of Public Worship and Education elaborated by Wöllner for the then Crown-prince in the violet velvet book. Church and School were by it alike placed under the authority of the letter, and an areopagitic power of censorship was given to the Government over the writings and conversation of every individual citizen.



It was impossible that such a decree should not have provoked immediate and indignant opposition in what had only yesterday been the Prussia of Frederick the Great. But when, by the side of pamphlets which with more or less freedom of expression commented on the Edict, a mild official protest reached the King from five out of the six members of the Consistory-in-chief, their supplication was referred for reply to the law-officers of the Crown, who were, at the same time, instructed to enquire into the expediency of establishing on a more effective footing the dormant censorship of the press. And, in point of fact, a Supplementary Edict was, with this end in view, very soon afterwards issued, which, however, perhaps because it was drawn up by a lawyer and not by an ecclesiastic, differed favourably from Wöllner's handiwork by its moderation of tone. This method of retort, however, failed to silence the storm of opposition which had been provoked. This expression which will not be thought too strong, when it is remembered that the resistance in question was largely carried on by spiritual and temporal officials against the Minister whom the Crown had placed over them—an experience hitherto unknown in the history of the Prussian State. It is from this point of view, as well as from that of the distrust excited between Crown and people, that the whole controversy possessed a distinct political, in addition to its general, interest.

You would not thank me for pursuing into its details the struggle that now ensued. Unhappily, as you know, this was not the last time that in Germany an inquisitorial system of government has been called upon to promote a reaction by finding victims to justify

its existence. But, in Prussia at least, this was, with quite insignificant exceptions, the last time that the machinery of such an inquisition was set to work against the spiritual freedom of the people. Of course, in this sentimental and soft-hearted age there was no fear of resort being had to the methods of Torquemada; but there are forms of persecution short of stake and rack. The domination of Wöllner and his clique was felt from the top of the political system to the bottom. Although, no doubt, other causes contributed to some of the chief Ministerial changes brought about in this period—the fall of Hertzberg, as we shall see, among the rest—yet none of those who fell were statesmen of a type to bend their heads before the camarilla. Yet, throughout the ranks of the public service, those who maintained their independence felt the ground trembling under their feet. The Grand-Chancellor, Count Carmer, whose name is remembered with grateful admiration to this day as the chief director of the vast labours which produced the great code of the territorial law (*Allgemeine Landrecht*) of Prussia, was deprived of part of his official functions, though not of his official title, at the very time when, after many difficulties and in the face of many obstacles, this code had at last been promulgated by royal ordinance. With him was now associated, if his place was not virtually taken, by the Minister of Justice, Goldbeek—who enjoyed the confidence of the dominant clique and who was, of course, an esteemed member of the Rosicrucian Order. The clergy and the teaching-body of the kingdom were vexed and harried by tests old and new—though the *régime* did not last long enough to produce a new

Symbol, such as Wöllner in vain sought to extract from the theologians of Halle, or to spread through the parsonages and schools of the land the new Catechism, a popular summary of faith which every effort was used to propagate. It must be allowed that, in the highest spheres of educational activity in the land—in the Universities—these endeavours were least successful: because here a sound corporate instinct banded the faculties and their members together against all encroachments upon their liberty of teaching. At Halle, the Theological Professors A. H. Niemeyer<sup>1</sup> and J. A. Nösselt, who had declined to engage in the composition of a new *summa theologiae* and to go down to posterity as the Flaciuses of their age, were reproved for their neological teaching and threatened with dismissal; but, though one of Niemeyer's books was prohibited, and Nösselt had to display great courage in his defence of freedom of teaching, a direct appeal to the King to remove them from their Chairs led to the squashing of the proceedings. Yet more notorious was the successful attempt of Wöllner to silence, by a blatant ordinance, the "religious rationalism," to use his own phrase, whereby Kant in a volume of collected essays, *Religion within the limits of pure Reason*, had sought to distinguish between the moral duties imposed by religion and the statutory obligations that may be imposed in its name. Kant was growing old, and may have been influenced by the knowledge that elsewhere, as well as in Prussia, the

<sup>1</sup> Niemeyer in 1809 published a *Life and Character* of his friend. He had himself, in 1807, been carried to France as a hostage, but was in 1808 appointed Chancellor of Halle University by King Jerome. His reputation as an authority on pedagogy was long-lived.

champions of intolerance were at this time raising their voices against his teaching. He replied with dignity, in a letter addressed directly to the King, but at its close stated that, in order to avoid the slightest suspicion, he deemed it most prudent, as his Majesty's most loyal subject, most solemnly to declare, that he would henceforth refrain from all public discussion of matters pertaining to religion, whether natural or revealed, both in his lectures and in his writings. If, as Kant afterwards averred, he was looking forward to a day of greater freedom under the reign of another King, this hope can hardly excuse his morigerations. When such a result could be achieved in the case of an academical teacher of the highest eminence, it was naturally hoped to beat down all opposition by means of a general Visitation of all universities and town-schools, conducted by a Commission of Triers. The first University visited was Halle, where the students, who had been much worried about their religious observances, lost no time about breaking the Commissioners' windows; and, an enquiry having led to no result, the Visitation found itself covered with ridicule, and the breakdown of the system of which it had represented the climax began to announce itself. Before the end of the reign, the religious Reaction was practically over. The King's devotion to the Order had cooled—as his ardour on almost every subject in heaven and earth cooled after a time—possibly with the aid of certain personal scandals, in which Bischoffswerder was said to be involved, and to which I need not here advert. Wöllner, however, remained in office, and the Commission of which he was the head was not dissolved till the



beginning of the next reign. His personal influence over the King seems to have dwindled, in proportion as the latter ceased to keep up his personal connexion with the Rosicrucian Order; the stage-management of the magical diversions which continued to be offered was now entrusted to base and menial hands.

Conducted as it had been by a small though resolute coterie, which failed to disguise the cooperation in its processes of motives undistinguishable from ambition and avarice, the movement which had undertaken to reestablish on a secure footing the moral life of the people had ended in undeniable collapse. The reasons why this episode, long in its course though the reverse of complicated in its character, seemed worth dwelling upon here at relative length are twofold. In the first instance, quite apart from the contradiction which it offered to the traditional policy of the Prussian State, the Reaction on which we have dwelt weakened, to an extent unprecedented in Prussian history and never (to my knowledge) reached on any subsequent occasion, the cohesion of the administrative system of the country, and loosened the tie between the Crown and its officials which had been a main strength of the monarchy. The arbitrary whims and caprices of former rulers had, indeed, from time to time interfered with the steady working of the machine; but the experience of dismissals and suspensions, which had nothing to do with official demerit—with service ill-performed—was a novelty in Prussia. A distrust of the authority of which they were the agents was inspired in the official classes at large; for, as we have seen, it had not been on the clergy and the teaching profession alone

(though they also might be reckoned in the official classes) that the persecution had descended; and even those who remained intact could not but feel the insecurity of tenure which had become a condition of their life. And at the root of the matter lay the knowledge that, behind the royal Government and the Ministry which directed it, stood a Cabal or Cabinet which, under more or less decorous official forms, constituted the supreme authority behind the Throne. Everyone knows—at least everyone may read at length in Pertz or Seeley—how, under Frederick William II's successor, the best-intentioned of sovereigns, but one rarely capable of nerving himself to any action of his own that sinned even against the most vicious tradition of the system under whose shadow he had grown up—how, under Frederick William III, the existence of such a Cabinet, coupled with the want of solidarity among the several Ministerial Departments was the stumbling-block of all true reformers, and the rock whereon at first the wave of Stein's political energy itself split. Even when he was more successful, in the dark days after the catastrophe, the change was only partial, and there have been later periods in Prussian history in which the evil of which I speak made its reappearance. But its weight was most heavily felt in the period following on the first full experience of it under Frederick William II.

Secondly, if, for scantiness of time, I may pass rather abruptly to a quite different aspect of the subject, the Reaction, in attempting (from whatever motives) to exert a permanent influence upon the spiritual life of the community, not only took a false

step, but one sure to avenge itself. War had been declared against the self-sufficiency of the shallow and finite enlightenment of the age, itself the bastard offspring of a philosophy of life far from ignoble but quite insufficiently thought out; and, having been declared on a false issue, it had been waged worse than in vain. The spirit of the times had needed correction, but to other purposes than these; and, already, more potent and more wholesome remedies, of which I can give no analysis here, were in preparation. But, though the dominant philosophy was to give way before thinkers of a very different calibre, and though its upholders were as a literary school on the very eve of annihilation by the new and true leaders of the national literature (the date of the *Xenienkampf* against Nicolai and Company is the last year of this reign), many of the most characteristic features of the Age of Enlightenment in its later and self-satisfied period continued to mark the society in which the movement had found a chief centre; and the recovery of this society from the false alarm created in it by the Reaction of Frederick William II's reign naturally tended to confirm its self-satisfaction. Undoubtedly, there was much on which society—in so far as it excluded the lower strata of the population—had reason for congratulating itself: in the middle and upper classes an increase of refinement had set in, and of capacity for rational enjoyment of the growing material comforts and luxuries of life. But this advance was unaccompanied by any signs of a growing desire to assume a part in the responsibilities of the community: active citizenship (and what is the meaning of passive citizenship?) was a conception

entering scarcely at all into the accepted ideal of humanity. That Cinderella, the State (to borrow a felicitous phrase) was expected to furnish security at home and protection abroad, but, in return, was not even to count on the devotion of sentiment. The ordinary feeling of patriotism threatened to become extinct, while, as a broader national sentiment, it was still vague and almost meaningless. Its place was to a far greater extent supplied by the cosmopolitanism fostered by a closer study of human nature, and by a profounder sympathy with it. In this cosmopolitanism was to be found the note of the most influential and most popular school of this period of European literature; and it was encouraged, from a different point of view, by the new Renaissance, represented by such modern Hellenes as Wilhelm von Humboldt—nay (why should I not venture to say so?) by both the chief and most honoured poets of the German nation in this period of their life and work. To the political sympathies and antipathies—to what may fairly be called the public feeling—of the educated classes of Prussian society in this age, the tendencies in question imparted a kind of dilettantism, which, if it stands in marked contrast to the servile obsequiousness of former generations, differs almost as greatly from the relatively free play of opinion in later times. Take, for instance, the dallyings (if I may so call them) with the enthusiasms of the French Revolution, which are to be found in the most various, and not unfrequently in the highest, spheres, of Berlin society of this age. This effect was due, in part, to the seductive breadth—now and then, to the seductive vagueness—of these ideas



themselves, and partly, no doubt, to the predilection for everything French which still remained over from an earlier age, and which, at a later date, stood the French invasion in good stead, when it accomplished the easy conquest of the *salons* of Berlin. But, in the period of which I am speaking, these loves were quite platonic; nor was there any serious thought at Berlin or in the kingdom at large, of any direct contact with the French Revolution and its representative ideas and institutions. For it is perfectly clear that a comfortable conviction prevailed—and in the reception given to those birds of ill-omen, the royalist Emigrants, this conviction pretty clearly manifested itself—of how little the troubles and disorders which had accompanied the progress of the Revolution in France could affect the Prussian State and its subjects, so long as between the country and its adversaries—actual or possible—still stood the army of Frederick the Great.

And this brings me, in conclusion, to suggest two questions which may not seem altogether impertinent. In the first place: Are there distinctly perceptible, in this period, the signs of a military decline? And, in the second place: What responsibility ought we to assign to such a decline, if it existed, among the causes of the catastrophe of the State in 1806? The foreign policy of the reign—which I purpose to survey in my third lecture—involved Prussia in several Wars: none of them, however, was of a nature effectively to test the powers of the army. The intervention in the Netherlands, in 1787, determined upon in the interests of the House of Orange and in support of British against French policy, was little more than an armed demonstration:

the mere appearance of a Prussian army under the Duke of Brunswick sufficed to overthrow the party of the States-General and to reestablish the Orange authority. This success, of course, greatly added to the prestige of the Prussian arms, and to the self-confidence of the army. In the Polish embroglio of 1790, the army, at the head of which the King had placed himself, was disbanded before striking a blow, and it was as a peace-maker, not as a soldier, that, on his return to Berlin, he was hailed by the acclamations of the people. In the War of the First Coalition, the Prussian troops played a secondary, though on more than one occasion, a not dishonourable, part, and Fortune, which favours the bold, did not cling to the steps of the Duke of Brunswick—a commander gifted with far more insight than resolution. After his withdrawal, the operations of his veteran successor, Möllendorff, though he gained one victory of secondary importance, were hopelessly crippled—as we may see in our next lecture—by political considerations. Finally, in the Polish War of 1793-4, in which the King himself for a time held the command, after quitting the scene of the War in the west, the main action of the campaign, the siege of Warsaw, was abandoned by the Prussians; and great indignation was excited by the incompetence of Schwerin's manœuvres against the insurgents. The honour of the final capture of Warsaw belonged to the Russian arms; but, as the issue was not in reality doubtful, and the object of the unequal struggle was gained, the shortcomings of the Prussian troops, which were essentially due to ineffective command and, as a detailed narrative would show, were compensated by

not a little gallantry and ability, were not seriously taken into account by public opinion at home or abroad. In a word, before the Prussian army entered upon the period of peace which opened with the Treaty of Bâle, there had been no overt signs—apart from the frequently unfortunate selection of generals—which could be held to argue a decline in its efficiency.

This very matter of the mistaken choice of commanders explains itself by the fact that the administration of the army, in its turn, suffered from the radical defects already noted with regard to the civil government of the State. In order to keep up the constant appearance of personal government, and of personal mastery such as his predecessors had contrived to exercise over all the details as well as over the main currents of business, the King, instead of conferring on military matters with a Minister of War, or with officials placed at the head of the chief military Departments, informed himself and gave directions concerning them through the medium of his Adjutant-general. The Adjutant-general under Frederick the Great had exercised no considerable influence; under Frederick William II and Frederick William III he was the King's chief adviser in military matters, and at those times when the sovereign's desire of asserting his own will relaxed, he became the King's representative in the affairs of the army. Yet he had no legal position corresponding to such an authority, and, inasmuch as there was no organic connexion between his office and the chief branches of the Military Department, he was without the necessary information concerning the matters on which he was called to advise. It was hardly

to be expected that the Supreme Board of War, as it was called—established by the King about the middle of his reign—and which consisted of the oldest generals of the army, would take its orders from an officer much inferior to them in age and in rank; for there is no principle so dear to the veteran military mind as that of seniority, and these were veterans of the great days of Frederick II, who of course knew best. The Heads of the Civil Departments called on for cooperation were still less inclined to furnish it at the bidding of a mere military officer; and the consequence is that the government of the army and the management of affairs connected with it had largely to be carried on—like the civil government of the State—by Cabinet Orders, i.e. by royal ordinances countersigned by nobody but the King's Cabinet Councillors, who were not Ministers at all.

But the real character of the relations just indicated will, perhaps, be most easily made evident if I translate them at once into the black-and-white of personalities. You know what the sovereigns were like, who, in this period of Prussian military history stood at the head of the army: Frederick William II, incapable of adhering to a resolution when he had formed it, and Frederick William III, incapable, one might almost say, during a long section of his reign, of forming a resolution at all. Let us, then, pass to the personages who, as Adjutant-generals, were under these Sovereigns the real directors of Prussian military affairs, the real Commanders-in-chief in our English sense, that is to say the real Horse Guards, of the army? Colonel Manstein had had a very considerable experience of



the barracks and the drilling-ground, and to him we may, I suppose, attribute some of the excellent reforms in that, in more than one sense narrow, sphere which, in agreement with Frederick William II's own kindness of feeling, were introduced early in his reign. But he seems to have been devoid of any wider kind of insight into military matters, and without the political sagacity indispensable in a military counsellor where military operations have to be carried on, not only against enemies, but with allies. Moreover, in military circles, he was looked upon with suspicion, as closely connected with the secret camarilla of the Rosicrucians and with their chief representative near the King, Bischoffswerder—who, as we have seen, was by no means devoid of sagacity, but who possessed no knowledge of war or of the affairs of war; and whom, in military matters, the King seems to have gradually come to consult less and less in the latter part of his reign, when the French and Polish Wars were in progress.

Under Frederick William III, the post was filled by Köckeritz. The memory of this worthy it is difficult to take seriously; but his palpable incompetence, which his master the King never seemed to take into account alongside of his fine military bearing and honest simple ways in private life, cannot be said to go for nothing in the military history of the years preceding the Prussian downfall. The "Köckeritz-epoch" is the title which has been given to the happiest period of the private life of Frederick William II's successor, when everything went on quietly in that disagreeable public life outside, while the sovereign's

chief military adviser smoked his pipe of peace in the kindly presence of goodman King and goodwife Queen in their country retreat at Paritz. I agree with a recent writer that Köckeritz was not largely responsible for the catastrophe of Jena and Austerlitz; but he illustrates, by an utter *reductio ad absurdum*, the system of which he had been the apex.

As a rule, it was an inevitable consequence of this defective system of military government that the easiest method of promotion to the highest posts was followed, and, on the face of the matter, the chief fault to be found with the dealings of Frederick William II with his army—and the chief fault actually found with them by most writers—is his nomination to supreme command of aged officers, no longer fit for their tasks. Such a one was Field-Marshal von Möllendorff, who held among the Prussian officers of this reign a position analogous to that which Father Wrangel held, within the memory of one or two of us, in the days before the beginning of the great military era in which we live; and who, like him, was, when the crisis of his career arrived, incapacitated by age and incompetence from taking any but an honourably passive part in the conflict. Möllendorff had fought with distinction in both the Seven Years' War and the War of the Bavarian Succession, and he could not understand why any changes of importance should be necessary in an army in which he had served so long; such matters he said, with biting irony, were "too high for him." Another veteran of the same type was Count Schwerin (nephew of the illustrious Schwerin, who fell at Prague), a humane and popular officer, and celebrated for his efforts on the

parade-ground. But, as his conduct in the Polish War showed, he lacked—perhaps partly in consequence of a life of excess—the vigour of will necessary for the conduct of a campaign, and showed a conception of war which has been likened to that of the chess-player whose only purpose is to put off the decision of the game. It will hence be intelligible why the military reforms accomplished in the reign of Frederick William II could hardly be other than reforms of detail: though, as such, an honourable place belongs to them in any more detailed military history, or—if the condition and treatment of the Prussian soldiery in previous reigns is remembered—in the history of civilisation. It must, moreover, be admitted that anything tending to raise the personal level of the soldier and improve the social condition of the army told in favour of the great change which, in another age, was to compose the Prussian army wholly out of the citizens of the country. A number of admirable reforms were, also, carried out in the conditions of service and life of the officers of the army, which speak almost equally well for the humane character of the King's intentions. I may remark, in passing, that the popular conception of the arrogance and pride of Prussian officers, which is represented as having—as it were—called down upon the Prussian army the nemesis of its catastrophe, is in so far erroneous, that it assumes the tone and style of exceptional, petted regiments, such as the *Garde du corps* and the *Gens d'armes*, to have animated a body of which they formed only a small and peculiar part. For the rest, no error could be greater than to suppose that the extreme confidence which the efforts

and victories of Frederick the Great had implanted in both army and people acted as a bar to plans and schemes for the reorganisation of the army on a more satisfactory basis. It only acted as a bar to the execution of such designs; in the conception and development of schemes of reform on paper hardly any age—as readers of Lehmann's *Scharnhorst* or of Goltz's *Rosbach und Jena* know—has been more prolific than this. I will only remind you that the constitution of the army of Frederick the Great had been based on a blending of two systems: that of conscription—in which, however, so many exceptions were allowed that it practically and *designedly* fell as a burden on the peasantry only—and that of recruitment; in other words, the armies of Frederick the Great were a mixture of professional mercenaries with a country militia, in nearly equal proportions. The country militia, moreover, was subjected to an extremely short service, not rising, on an average, so high as two years under arms—a very short time, when the ordinary degree of intelligence among the peasantry of that period is taken into account. In this system, there were all the elements of development; and, in the new Code of Regulations for the Canton or Militia System published under Frederick William II in 1792, the principle of universal liability to military service—which, for that matter, already Frederick William I had proclaimed—was reasserted as the basis of the military system of the country. Unfortunately, however, the same multiplicity of exceptions—virtually including the whole of the upper and middle classes—was again sanctioned, and this declaration thus deprived of all practical signifi-



cance. Thus, while the excesses of the recruiting system were in a large measure curbed in this reign, and, through its new territorial acquisitions, the numbers of the army were considerably increased (by not very far short of one-sixth), no serious attempt was made to utilise for purposes of war the popular strength of the nation, as was done by France in the formation of her great Revolutionary army.

We cannot wonder at such having been the case, in view of the belief, handed down from the great days of Frederick II, in the superiority of long-service troops—a belief to some extent encouraged by military events in the Revolutionary War. Beyond a doubt, the postponement of the organic change already advocated by many far-sighted minds, may be set down as showing a falling-short of the highest statesmanship; as, again, the refusal to modify—even after the teachings of the First Coalition War—the tactics of Frederick the Great, was a proof of defective higher military capacity. But it is not in the condition of the army as a military engine, or in the relative (but only relative) want of insight into the best methods of perfecting it as such, that a candid judgment will, I think, find a signal illustration of the decline of Prussia during the eleven years of Frederick William II's reign. Administrative disorganisation, and lack of the discipline without which sentimental loyalty itself is as naught<sup>1</sup>—these

<sup>1</sup> Think for instance of the perfectly well-authenticated anecdote of Prince Lewis, proclaimed the Hotspur of his age, declaring in a company of officers and others after the conclusion of the Peace of Bâle, that he hoped the army would rise in revolt against such a Peace, and that he was quite ready to become the leader of the mutiny.

were the characteristic features of a decline which the army shared with the other services of the State, and which, coupled with the perverseness of the Government's policy and the enlightened indifference of a great part of the educated classes, actually brought the State itself to a fall.

It forms no part of my purpose to recall to you the circumstances of that downfall, or to revive humiliating memories, not to be lightly evoked in the history of a sister-nation any more than in that of a fellow-man. The remainder of my task must lie in an attempt to indicate how the mistaken foreign policy of the reign of Frederick William II contained some further germs of the calamities of that of his successor. To-night, while thanking you for a rather heavily taxed attention, I would fain remind you, in conclusion, that the catastrophe of Prussia from which she was so heroically to recover, but which was not the catastrophe of a day or a year, should not be sought in the loss of a single battle. To begin with, Jena was not ignobly lost; it was lost against vastly superior numbers, and there are those who have held that the fortune of war might, during the very course of that fatal day, have given a different turn to the issue. But be this as it may—the catastrophe of Prussia consisted in what befel after Jena: in the collapse of so many of the defences of the State through a cowardice rightly branded as treason; in the ready submission to the conqueror of so large a proportion of the civil servants of the Crown; and in the indifference (to use no stronger term) of so considerable an element of the educated society of the land, and more especially of the capital, to the fact that

their country had become a house of bondage. Of these results I have in to-night's lecture made an extremely imperfect endeavour to indicate certain contributory causes. On some further causes I have intentionally abstained from touching, and on none of them would it have been possible to dwell with the completeness without which fairness of statement is difficult. But enough may have been said to show to which of the principles of government that had hitherto stood the monarchy in good stead, the home government of Prussia was untrue in this period of the beginning of her decline.

### III

#### THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PRUSSIA IN THE REVOLUTIONARY AGE

I PURPOSE, if you will still favour me with your attention as I discuss a side of our subject which has but little pretension to attractiveness, to review, in this concluding lecture, the steps whereby the foreign policy of the reign of Frederick William II helped to make possible the catastrophe of Prussia under his son. It contributed to this result by isolating Prussia among the great Powers of Europe, and thus bringing about the day when she fell, unaided and alone. I am aware that the story must seem, at best, only half-told which leaves without comment the blindness and the corruption that so largely account for the fatal errors of Prussian policy in the period of so-called neutrality ensuing upon the Peace of Bâle. Yet, in and by that

Peace, she definitely entered upon the path that was to lead to humiliation and ruin.

The reign of Frederick William II (1786-97) coincides, quite sufficiently for our purpose, with the years during which the French Revolution ran its course, from the first meeting of the National Assembly to the close of the Italian campaign and the complete establishment of the supremacy of the victorious Bonaparte. Within the same years, the policy of Russia, under the sway of the great Empress Catharine II, was not less dangerous to the peace of Europe by its irresponsibility and by its despotic process of conquest than was the wild and wanton propaganda of the French Revolution, and finally removed the barrier of an independent Poland, besides distinctly mapping out the partition of south-eastern Europe. Between these revolutionary forces the political system of the whole Continent was utterly undone, and an astounding sequence of further changes prepared. How far did the action or inaction of the great German Powers in Mid-Europe, and of Prussia in particular, contribute to these results, or tend to hinder them; and in what way did the earlier of them, largely accomplished under her own cooperation, affect the immediate destinies of Prussia herself?

My admiration of the genius and, what is much more, of the character, of Frederick the Great falls short of no biographer's sympathy and of no patriot's praise; but, with or without Kant's treatise, we know that the distinction between political and private morality is a figment; with or without Raleigh's admonition, we know that God is the same God, and



His law the same law, in every country and in every day of the history of the world. The rape of Silesia in the hour of Austria's mortal weakness had sown a seed of distrust and jealousy and desire for *revanche*—which I believe means revenge—that no treaties and no arguments of reason could overpower; foiled in his masterly combination, which had provoked the Seven Years' War, Kaunitz had, after the conclusion of the struggle, by no means abandoned his plannings and plottings against the *fait accompli*. So long as Maria Theresa—herself, on this one subject, implacable—survived, her gifted heir had been fain to display his originality by open or implied contradiction; but, in truth, Joseph II had well learnt his lesson from Kaunitz, and, when he could act for himself, was only anxious to better the instruction. Thus (to pass by all earlier occasions of conflict), quite towards the conclusion of the great King's reign, the Emperor had resumed his scheme of incorporating Bavaria in the Austrian dominions, in the execution of which he had been formerly baffled by Frederick's and Prussia's readiness for war. This time, he thought to carry it out by means of an exchange for Bavaria of the Austrian Netherlands, to which the Elector was to be tempted by the glittering prospect of a Burgundian Crown. Informed of the project, late but not too late, Frederick had replied by improvising the machinery of the Confederation of Princes (*Fürstenbund*), which overthrew the Emperor Joseph's design at the last moment. It was not a North-German league, nor a Protestant league, but a skilful appeal, against the dynastic appetites of the Imperial House, to the fears of the

other German Princes, including potentates so little in general harmony with King Frederick as his neighbour Augustus of Saxony and his kinsman George of Hanover. But, so long at least as an ambition like that of Joseph II directed the policy of Austria, it was not likely that she would be allowed to forget what State had despoiled her of one German province, and prevented her from absorbing another.

But, besides the mortal jealousy of the Austrian Government, another and yet more dangerous legacy had been bequeathed to the Prussian State by another momentous step in the foreign policy of Frederick the Great. During the later years of his reign, he guarded the peace of Europe with a solicitude and a skill hardly surpassed by those of the great German statesman of our own day in the years when he strove—and strove, in his day, successfully—to avert the nemesis of success. He had but little to fear from France, loth to forego the more manifest opportunity of humiliating a more ancient rival (Great Britain, then engaged in the American War), and, moreover, not yet oblivious of Rossbach, or to be induced, even by the King's Austrian consort Queen Marie-Antoinette, to intervene in the War of the Bavarian Succession. But the great Tsarina had assumed sovereign authority as Frederick's enemy; and, though she had been too sagacious to prevent the establishment of a dualism in Germany, which his victory implied, she had almost as much to apprehend from a war with Austria, in which Prussia must become involved, as from an alliance with Austria, of which Prussia must be the victim. To avert these issues and, as I have said, to keep the peace, Frederick

the Great became the accomplice of Russia in the great crime of the First Partition of Poland. For I think that Ranke, whose imperturbable coolness in the treatment of such problems certainly leaves nothing to be desired, must be allowed to be correct in representing Frederick's participation in this transaction to have been primarily intended to satisfy Russia, and thereby to avert the menace of war between her and Austria on account of the designs of Russia upon the Turkish provinces. Secondarily, no doubt, he thought of filling up the territorial gap in the Prussian dominions which he had long since deplored. Granted this sequence of motives, and granted also that the consolidation of the Prussian monarchy was an object in itself desirable, yet, by joining in the plot, Frederick the Great engaged Prussian statesmanship in a course which could not but lead to its becoming involved in Russia's next process of annexation on her western frontier. Nor, indeed, had Frederick II prevented the resumption, before the date of his death, of Russia's eastern policy which led to the outbreak of war between her and Turkey in the second year of Frederick William II's reign.

But though Frederick the Great had thus by his action inevitably imposed upon the foreign policy of Prussia a jealous vigilance as towards Austria, and a dangerous subservience as towards Russia, he had, as a rule, intervened as little as possible in the complications of European politics. For he knew how it was, so to speak, a law of the existence of his State that he should economise the strength of his people, and a saying of his is extant which contains, in germ, Prince

Bismarck's famous maxim as to the value to be set on the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier. Thus, the State ruled by the aggressive author of the First Silesian War had come to be regarded as a conservative force in the Empire and in Europe at large—an anchorage against the restless activity of Emperor and Tsarina, as well as a security for continued peace with France. In contrast with this habitual attitude of vigilant quiescence under Frederick the Great, the reign of his successor exhibits, as Seeley has correctly pointed out, a quite novel series of Prussian interferences in the general controversies of Europe—an expression, no doubt, intended by the historian as distinguishing them from questions connected with the Empire or affecting Prussia from the point of view of immediate vicinity. Thus, in a sense, Prussia made her *début* as one of the Great Powers of Europe in the new reign; and this *début* was the reverse of a fortunate one.

Of the first period of Prussian foreign policy under Frederick William II, I need say but little. It may be reckoned from his accession, in 1786, to the Convention of Reichenbach, in 1790, which signified the beginning of a new "system" (to use the political jargon of the day), in opposition to that advocated by Hertzberg, the representative statesman in foreign politics of this early period. Hertzberg was an official of a very superior type—whose historical knowledge and diplomatic experience had alike been invaluable to Frederick the Great: he had undergone a long schooling in the dynastic and political archives of the State before he was more exclusively employed upon what we should



call Foreign Office work proper: when King Frederick William II requested him to institute an enquiry into the relationship between the Electors of Brandenburg and the Kings of Hungary, he replied: "There is no necessity for me to institute enquiries into the subject, as I know it all by heart." Thus, from his studies he had imbibed a love of thoroughness, which was apt to degenerate into the pedantry of self-conceit, and a confidence in his own superior judgment which made him a critic of the inconsequences or imperfections in the policy of his great master himself. As became a man of thought and historical learning, he had, at the same time, nourished those patriotic sentiments towards Germany and German culture from which Frederick the Great turned coldly aside. On the whole, he had, during the later years of Frederick, regretfully felt it his duty to oppose most of the King's measures of policy—except the acquisition of East-Prussia in the Partition of Poland, which he had eagerly urged and skilfully expedited; but he had been roughly reduced to silence by his sovereign, and obliged to take part in transactions of which, in principle, he disapproved. Thus, both by his chronic dissatisfaction and by his ample experience, he was marked out for the confidence of the new Sovereign, on whose accession he was covered with honours and favours and allowed for the first time a controlling influence upon the conduct of foreign affairs.

It must not be supposed that Hertzberg, though, in the Berlin Academy and elsewhere, he played the part of patron of German letters and art, had any sympathy with whatever national aspirations might attach them-

selves to Frederick the Great's last political achievement—the successful defiance of Austria's dynastic ambition by the improvised revival of the old device of a defensive League of German Princes. Frederick William, as we saw, had, while still Crown-prince, professed a strong interest in this scheme, of which his flatterers credited him with the initiation; but, though at Weimar and at Mainz there might be thoughts of further utilising so effective an organisation, they met with no favour at Berlin, where it was thought to have served its purpose by checkmating Austrian designs. The German question did not enter into the plans of Hertzberg, which revolved round a new version, devised by himself, of the old scheme of the Balance of Europe. The north of Europe, represented by Russia and Great Britain, with Prussia as the controlling Power in their midst, was, by means of a close alliance, to counterbalance the southern Powers, Austria and France with her satellite Spain. Unfortunately for this "system," Russia and Austria were at this time closely cooperating in the pursuit of the Eastern policy for which Catharine had gained Joseph's support: the destruction of this intimacy was therefore a necessary preliminary to gaining the friendship of Russia in a degree in which Frederick II had never gained or wished to gain it. On the other hand, to bring about a close alliance with Great Britain was to risk a weakening, if not an actual interruption, of the pacific relations with France which the Government of Lewis XVI had hitherto shown every desire to maintain.

After some hesitation, Frederick William II accepted

the latter part or section of Hertzberg's scheme, stimulated by events in the Netherlands which had aroused his personal interest. Here, French and British policy had for a long time striven—in the good old fashion—to thwart and oppose each other. French influence supported the so-called Patriot faction—a strange mixture of the remnants of the old aristocratic-conservative party in the State with the new democratic ferment; Great Britain, on the other hand, not unmindful of the hostile part played by the Provinces in the American War, propped up the insecure tenure of quasi-monarchical authority still possessed by the House of Orange. The sister of Frederick William II—Wilhelmina—was the consort of the Stadholder William V of Orange; and the increase of French influence, with the consequent demands of the Patriot party for the restriction of the powers of the stadholdership and the uncontrollable violence of the Dutch mobs, made the King fear, with reason, for his sister's safety. Thus was brought about, on really slight grounds, the first direct intervention of Prussia in a field of European politics with which as a State she had no concern; and the success of this intervention undoubtedly encouraged her in the dubious path. The victorious march of the Duke of Brunswick across the Dutch frontier and back again, besides confirming the Prussian army in the idea of its invincibility, accustomed the King to the part of protector of legitimate authority, which he was afterwards to play on a larger scale. The United Provinces had succumbed without striking a blow; the Stadholder and his consort were once more established at the Hague; her chivalrous brother had forgiven the Dutch

(who were quite satisfied with the bargain) the costs of the expedition; and France, after showing some disposition to intervene in her turn, had discreetly put a stop upon her armaments. Meanwhile, part of Hertzberg's scheme—the establishment of an intimate understanding with Great Britain—had been actually accomplished.

For the moment, as you know will happen after any unusual display of political vigour, there can be no doubt that the Dutch expedition of 1787 (which the books are to this day inclined to place before us in the light of a master-stroke) raised the general influence of Prussia in European affairs after a fashion very flattering to the self-esteem of her statesmen. A policy of intervention, once begun, is only too easily multiplied in its applications: and, in these years, Prussian policy, or the policy, as it proudly called itself, of the Triple Alliance between Great Britain, the United Provinces and Prussia, was effectually busy in the most diverse quarters. What is called the prestige acquired by the State, that is to say the prevalent belief that because it had carried its point in one quarter it was likely to be able to do so in others, was much to the advantage of Prussian policy for the moment; her interposition together with that of her ally prevailed to avert from Sweden a Danish attack, and was invoked in Poland and elsewhere. But the second part of Hertzberg's "great plan," which was to secure the friendship of Russia on terms favourable to Prussia, proved impossible of execution. He had, at the time of the First Partition of Poland, thought it madness in Frederick the Great to allow Austria to secure Galicia; now, he contrived



an elaborate arrangement whereby this province should be restored to Poland, and compensations found in the south-east, which would induce both Russia and Austria to consent to the completion, in the north-east, of the Polish acquisitions of Prussia. Inasmuch as the success of this scheme was conditional on the approval of Austria and Russia, both of whom were at war with Turkey for their own ends; on the goodwill of Poland, which was to undergo the double process of recovery and cession for Prussia's benefit; on the assent of Turkey, the party that was to pay the cost by cessions pure and simple, and on the acquiescence of the rest of Europe, which could gain nothing by the transaction, the apparent chance of its success was small. And in truth, the more ardent admirer of Prussia's new political manœuvring encouraged by her success in Holland, urged that a more open advantage should be taken of the War in which Russia and Austria were involved with the Turk, and that Prussia, with the other members of the Triple Alliance in the background, should boldly unite with Sweden and Poland to defy the two Imperial Courts. Already, no opportunity had been lost of harassing the Austrian Government by supporting the malcontents and insurgents in Hungary and Belgium. And, at the end of January 1790, a step of unprecedented audacity was taken, of which it is difficult even now to think without amazement, by the signature of a Treaty of Alliance with Turkey, on which a declaration of war by Prussia against Austria and Russia was logically expected to follow. Thus, though set in motion by his scheming activity, the course of events had passed quite beyond Hertzberg's control; and a conflict seemed

on the eve of breaking out, which must have led to issues far different from those originally contemplated by him.

But, before this Treaty was ratified by King Frederick William II—but ratified with omissions and modifications which in their total entirely altered its character and reduced its significance—the whole aspect of affairs had changed, and the first period of the foreign policy of this reign, marked by defiance of Austria, had practically come to an end. The unquiet spirit of the Emperor Joseph II was at rest. The failure of his operations in the Turkish War had been one of the numerous disappointments of his later years: for the fatal disease was already upon him, when at last fortune seemed to alight upon his arms. He had passed away, distracted by private grief and worn by public cares; only a few months before his death, he had withdrawn the great reforms from which he had hoped so much, without thereby recovering the allegiance of Belgium, the loyalty of the Magyars, or even the popularity forfeited by him among his own Austrian subjects. His high purposes as a ruler have met with a more generous recognition by posterity than was accorded to them by his contemporaries; but his foreign policy had exhibited the traditional acquisitiveness of his House, and Kaunitz had taught him to distrust Prussia after, as well as before, the death of her great King, and thus to seek the aggrandisement of his empire by an understanding with Russia, the ally wooed in vain by the rival Power. To Joseph II now succeeded his brother Leopold II, a contrast in almost every respect to his eager and idealist predecessor—cautious, reserved, self-restrained and self-

controlled; but not his inferior either in political ability or in a steady determination to maintain the interests of his State. Taking the management of the policy of Austria at once into his own hands—for Kaunitz could not hope to carry over his influence into another reign, and the cardinal principle of his system, the French Alliance, had been recently shaken at the base by the outbreak of the Revolution—Leopold II resolved to break away from the Eastern policy of his predecessor and to satisfy Prussia and her Western allies of his resolution to forego any accession of territory at Turkey's expense. The overtures made directly by the new Emperor to the King of Prussia—Kaunitz and Hertzberg being, as it were, alike put out of court—did not fail to take effect upon a disposition peculiarly open to such impressions; and the influence of Bischoffswerder and the Rosicrucian clique in general was, as a matter of course, thrown on the Austrian side. And a very notable influence was exercised in the same direction by the Prussian Ambassador at St Petersburg, then resident at Warsaw, who was to play a fatal part in the years immediately preceding Prussia's downfall. Marquis Lucchesini, an Italian—a native of that city of exiles, Lucca—who had been originally recommended to Frederick II by d'Alembert, was a diplomatist of much ability, and by no means blinded by his readiness to do his best with his instructions, in the face of probable issues not taken into account in them. Though he was afterwards a strong adherent of the French alliance, his suspicions were awakened by the proceedings of Napoleon long before the catastrophe; and it was thus with eyes half-open that he took part in

drawing Prussia towards her fall. What patriotism was there to steady a diplomatic adventurer of his type? "Tell Talleyrand," this Russo-Italian once wrote to his wife, "that the Emperor will find me a much better Frenchman than he takes me for." Thus, the policy of Hertzberg suffered a complete defeat. The Treaty of Alliance with Turkey was, as I have said, toned down into practical meaninglessness; and at the Conference of Reichenbach, in return for Austria's consenting to accept the *status quo ante bellum* (thus abandoning the thought of any present acquisition eastward), Prussia withdrew all claims for a readjustment of the Polish Partition, and even agreed to cooperate with her allies the Maritime Powers in bringing about the restoration of the Austrian rule over the Belgic Provinces. In the following year, Austria, through the mediation of Prussia and her associates of the Triple Alliance, concluded peace with the Porte (Sistova); and, in return, the best offices of these Powers were given to enable Leopold to put an end to the short-lived existence of the young Belgic Republic. Russia, however, still carried on the Turkish War, although, in the pursuit of her plans of aggrandisement, she had to confront what was now the united opposition of Austria, Prussia and the Maritime Powers. If I have succeeded in making clear the change which had thus gradually come over the relations between the chief European States, you will have perceived how the policy of Hertzberg had hopelessly collapsed; so that the baffled statesman might well devote the rest of his career to the curatorship of the Berlin Academy and to the cultivation of silk-cocoons, varied by lamentations



over Reichenbach and the thankless generation for which he had toiled in vain.

About the time when the Conference of Reichenbach was advancing the eastern politics of Europe into a new stage, the first year of the French Revolution (according to accepted chronology) was drawing to a close. Great events and mighty changes had already marked its course; but its excesses had not yet been such as to alienate from it the widespread sympathy evoked by a movement dealing in so reasonable a fashion with the lumber of the past. Moreover, though King Lewis XVI was, practically, in the hands of his good people, a compromise still seemed possible between some of the forms and some of the principles of the old and the new order of things, and the man who could, better than any one, effect such a compromise—Mirabeau, with whom we met as the would-be reformer of the Prussian monarchy—was in the full height of his vigour and activity. Thus, at Berlin there existed, at the same time, in the educated classes of society (for among the uneducated it would be futile to look for any intelligent interest in matters so remote), a good deal of sympathy with the ideas which seemed realising themselves in France, and, among practical politicians, a good deal of satisfaction at the way in which France was preoccupying herself. With the full approval of his Sovereign, Count Bernhard von der Goltz—the Prussian Ambassador in Paris—entered into very confidential relations with the party of progress in the National Assembly. When, even after the crimes of the Terror, we find Lord Malmesbury reporting from Berlin that a great number of the principal officers

there were men of decidedly Jacobin leanings, we may conclude how widespread was the satisfaction felt and avowed, at this earlier time, with the new order of things in France. Nor could the very circumstance, that the same faction which was seeking to introduce an intolerable system of spiritual and social oppression at home looked with an evil eye upon the emancipation from all such fetters which was accomplishing itself in France, fail to intensify the sympathy which hailed the successive advances of that process. There is reason to believe that, so early as the middle of the year 1790 pressure was put upon the King by Bischoffswerder, to induce him to enter upon a course fraught with the most momentous consequences to the State—a defence of the French Throne, as such, against the French Revolution.

But, as yet, the Alliance between Austria and Prussia was itself incomplete; for the caution of Leopold II had delayed its conclusion while the intentions of Prussia concerning Poland still remained undecided. We remember what important cessions to Prussia Hertzberg had thought it might prove possible to bring about, with the consent of the Polish Diet or otherwise; now, the Prussian Government, in complete contradiction of its former policy, was found ready to assent to the scheme, warmly approved by Austria, of the establishment of a hereditary Polish kingdom under a Saxon dynasty of Sovereigns. This State, provided with a constitution guaranteed by the two German Great Powers, would be exempt from what had lain like a blight on the Republic of the Kingdom of Poland—viz. the elective character of its monarchy. The scheme,

to which the two rival Powers had thus suddenly agreed with so wonderful a unanimity, fell in, to perfection, with the wishes of the British Government, which was at this time mainly actuated by a deep jealousy of the advance of Russia. If Prussia permanently supported such a policy, all expectations or apprehensions of any future cooperation between her and Russia would be at an end; and a combination of conservative influences would have been effected, which would postpone, for some time to come, any fear of revolutionary changes in the map of Europe.

It was in this sense that the special mission of Bischoffswerder to Vienna was intended, which took place early in 1791. Shortly afterwards Count Haugwitz was, by the special request of the Emperor Leopold, appointed Ambassador at Vienna. This statesman was to play a conspicuous part in the history of Prussia's decline, and to be associated, more than any other man, with the political transactions that directly led to her catastrophe. It was the fate of Haugwitz, like that of other Prussian statesmen of whom we have spoken, to struggle—at times struggle painfully—against errors of policy for which he had to become responsible; and he was unfortunate enough to be the Minister whom King Frederick William III afterwards thought it desirable to play off from time to time against the more reckless and high-spirited Hardenberg. Hardenberg, as you know, was his own historian, and the historian of the transactions in which he took part; and thus Haugwitz has probably had as scant justice from posterity as he had from Princes, officers and populace at the time of the mobilisation before Jena. But I think that, all

allowances made, he was a statesman neither of power nor of character, wanting both in the assiduity which is never found unprepared, and in the courage which is indispensable in political action. He was too apt to form an opinion, only in order to surrender it under pressure, and to consent to acts of which his judgment disapproved, in the hope of being able by some new device to avert their necessary consequences. Thus he was, in truth, by reason of the facility with which he lent himself for use, a more dangerous instrument in the hands of a wayward or an incompetent King than a doctrinaire like Hertzberg, or a man of spirit like Hardenberg, both of whom, though the former was a pedant and the latter not a man of high principle, drew the line *somewhere*. For the rest, I cannot positively assert that Haugwitz was a Rosicrucian; but he adhered to the faction favoured by the Order, while he was pietistic in his sympathies, and given up to fantastic mystical speculations, for which he seems to have first imbibed a taste from Lavater—not a very limpid fountain-head. He was also a disciple of the Mesmerists, and had dealings with the arch-quack Cagliostro himself.

Under such influences, then (for this was the time when the religious Reaction had fully established its ascendancy in Prussia), the agreement between the two German Great Powers was gradually (for caution attended all the actions of Leopold) brought to a conclusion. It was to comprise an understanding between the Sovereigns in European affairs in general, and on the Polish question in particular. But, before the meeting was actually held between the two Sovereigns



in the palace of the Saxon Elector at Pillnitz—who so much interested as he in the establishment of a hereditary monarchy in Poland?—their attention had been more closely and anxiously than before engaged by the state of affairs in France. These could hardly even yet be called desperate; but the mediating influence of Mirabeau had been removed by death, the King was helpless at Paris, and the French Emigration, Comte d'Artois at its head, was straining every nerve to bring about a foreign intervention. (With their ends, which were in part grossly disloyal to King and Queen we have here no concern<sup>1</sup>.) But, though Leopold was not insensible to the perils of his sister and her family, and though the Emigrants highly appreciated the chivalrous reception accorded them by Frederick William II at Berlin, neither of these Sovereigns, either before or at Pillnitz, ventured—so far as France was concerned—to do more than temporise with the Revolution. In June 1791, the second attempt of Lewis XVI and his family to escape from France had been frustrated by their arrest at Varennes; and it was impossible but that serious apprehensions should not now prevail for their personal safety. Yet, the Preliminary Treaty concluded by the German Powers in July, wherein the agreement between them on the subject of Poland was fully defined, contained no reference to French affairs, beyond the expression of a hope that a general European understanding would be arrived at; and, after Leopold had ascertained that Great Britain was resolved to remain neutral in the event of a conflict with France,

<sup>1</sup> On this subject, see E. Daudet, *Histoire de l'Émigration*, vol. III. (1907): *Coblentz*, 1789-93.

he removed all doubts as to his present intentions by placing his army on a peace-footing and dismissing half his troops from active service. And, in August, in the famous Conferences of Pillnitz themselves—famous however rather for what did *not* take place there than for what did—the hopes of the French Emigration, represented on the occasion by its foremost member, Comte d'Artois, were once more utterly disappointed. No doubt, the Emperor Leopold, from whom, as the kinsman of the French royal house, most might have been expected, was chiefly conspicuous by his prudence; for it was he who advised Lewis XVI to accept the democratic Constitution which was to be offered to him in the following September; and which, in what to many ardent spirits seemed the last golden hour of the Revolution, he actually accepted. But the enthusiasm of Frederick William II, eagerly stimulated by his confidential advisers, was quite at one with the caution of his ally; and the statesmanship of Russia, who had now made peace with Turkey and was ready to address herself again to the affairs of Poland, was disabused of its friendly expectation of a conflict between the German Powers and France.

The actual responsibility for the outbreak of that Revolutionary War which began in 1792, and about which so much bombast has been written and talked and sung—rests neither with Prussia nor with Austria, and, more obviously, not with Great Britain, whose Sovereign grumbled, in concert with Frederick William II, that the day seemed to have passed when nations went to war in support of the Right Divine. It rests with the Gironde—the party in the French Assembly

who determined, as being the easiest way by which to destroy the French monarchy, to delude the nation into the belief that the King was about to undo the Revolution with the aid of the foreigner. In February, 1792, Leopold II was still writing to his sister that he and the King of Prussia were resolved to abstain from interference in the internal concerns of France, unless the personal safety of the royal family were actually endangered, and in no case to seek the overthrow of the French Constitution. Already, however,—in the middle of the January preceding—the decree had gone forth in which the French Assembly threatened the Emperor with war, unless he abandoned his aggression against the French Constitution; and, a few days afterwards, it was followed by an actual ultimatum of the most summary kind. Prussia signified her assent to the remarkably temperate reply given by the Emperor. But, although the unhappy Lewis XVI and his helpless Ministers would, of course, have cheerfully acquiesced in that reply, there was no probability of its being accepted by the interested indignation of the most active party in the Assembly. Accordingly, in the War which must ensue, France would clearly have to reckon with two powerful adversaries, loyally attached to each other and to the policy pursued by them in common. And, in point of fact, before the inevitable French Declaration of War ensued, Austria and Prussia actually concluded their definitive Treaty of Alliance (February). But, in that Treaty—in which the two Powers entered upon a mutual guarantee of their possessions—there was a singular omission. The joint guarantee of the new Polish Constitution, which had

implied the agreement of the two great German Powers in their Polish policy and their common antagonism to the subversive policy of Russia, was left out.

Here we have arrived at the termination of what, if you please, we may call the second period in the history of the foreign policy of this reign: during which, under the influence of the reactionary party in Church and State of whom we wot, and through the instrumentality of agents more flexible than the self-opinionated Hertzberg, Prussia followed—to all appearance steadily and without divergence—the Austrian lead. That she had done so, notwithstanding the old anti-Austrian traditions on the one hand, and notwithstanding the goodwill towards France which still pervaded a large section of Prussian civil and military society, from the King's uncle, Prince Henry, downwards, was due, in the first instance, to the impulses of the King and the influences among his surroundings to which sufficient reference has been made; and, in the second place, to the temperate and circumspect policy of the Emperor, who, though Kaunitz still survived, was, practically, the director of his own foreign policy. On 1st March, 1792—a few days after the conclusion of the Treaty of Alliance with Prussia just mentioned—Leopold II died, with an expression of hope on his lips that peace might still be preserved. In his place, Francis II mounted the Imperial Throne, from which he was to descend as the last German Emperor of the old Succession. There is no need here for any attempt at characterising Metternich's good master, and the favourite of the light-hearted Viennese; but it will not be denied that in him a full portion



both of Habsburg obstinacy and of Florentine *ruse* were by his descent, or otherwise, commingled. After some not very successful attempts with other statesmen in Kaunitz's place, he very soon took into his confidence, and entrusted with the conduct of the foreign affairs of Austria, a politician after his own heart—Thugut. In attempting a brief estimate of the proceedings of Prussian policy in the period that follows, we should not overlook the fact that they were directed against the statecraft of this Minister, unscrupulous in his choice of means and incapable of aiming at higher ideals than the increase of the territorial power of the State he served. He was indifferent alike to the German traditions and the German position of the Habsburg dynasty, and, above all, free from any scruples with regard to her new ally, whom till quite recently every Austrian—from the occupant of the Throne to the poorest peasant enrolled in his army—had regarded as his natural adversary.

These new influences no candid judgment will fail to take into account; but it would be preposterous to conclude that to them was due the origin of the rift within the lute, the germ of future discord in the harmony obtaining between the two German Powers. The origin of the ultimate rupture between Austria and Prussia—the possibility of which, as we saw just now, betrayed itself in the very instrument of the Alliance between them (the February Treaty of 1792)—has to be sought in the intrigues of Russia, still under the sway of the imperious Catharine, anxious to avenge the resistance of Europe to her plans of aggrandisement in the East, and more especially to avenge the

share taken in that resistance by the German Powers. Catharine's endeavours had, therefore, been directed to involving these Powers in war with France, whose Royalist exiles had found steady encouragement at St Petersburg; and, though she had not as yet succeeded in effecting her end, and in provoking a conflict during which she might have overrun Poland, and, spurning aside its new-fangled Constitution, established her own protectorate over the unhappy country—yet she had succeeded in something short of this. In other words, the Prussian statesmen had become aware of the Russian schemes, and had asked themselves whether they contained any promise of advantage for the State which had agreed to the First Partition? It can be shown that, by the time of the conclusion of the Treaty of Alliance with Austria on the eve of the Revolutionary War, they had convinced themselves, and succeeded in convincing King Frederick William II, that the Russian plan of repartitioning Poland would be one into which it would be advantageous for Prussia to enter. But, since to enter into it involved the overthrow of the Polish Constitution guaranteed by both the German Powers, an understanding between them on the subject seemed desirable; and, simultaneously with the negotiations for the Treaty of Alliance against Revolutionary France, question and answer went backwards and forwards as to the "compensations" which Austria would require, if Prussia were increased by a number of Polish palatinates making up very nearly the present province of Posen. No conclusion was arrived at; but, as I have said, the guarantee of *the* free Polish Constitution was omitted, a meaningless

guarantee of a free Polish Constitution substituted, and the Allies began the War at discord with one another, alike prepared to play Russia's game, and alike hoping to gain some advantage out of it for themselves.

This was understood well enough by the ambitious Girondist who, after for a time conducting the foreign policy of France, assumed the command of her Northern armies. But, though Dumouriez, in his attempts to secure Belgium for France, sought to avail himself of the jealousies among the Allies—intensified by the check which the Prussian army had experienced at Valmy—in order to conclude a separate peace with Prussia, this humiliating proposal fell to the ground. Several of the King's advisers—including Manstein, his chief military counsellor—advocated this escape from a doubly difficult position; but the King's enthusiasm and sense of honour (such as they were) would in all probability have made him refuse to yield to this advice, even had the repugnance which it provoked in him not been influenced by the news of the proclamation of the Republic at Paris. Neither on this occasion nor on that of the renewal of the French overtures, was Frederick William II found prepared to accept the proposal of a separate peace; yet it is probable that the self-restraint implied in his refusal intensified the illwill felt at the Prussian headquarters against the Austrian Ally. The Duke of Brunswick, who had from the first proposed to refrain from advancing beyond the line of the Meuse, was, after the rebuff at Valmy (September 20th), less inclined than ever to extend the scope of his operations. Then followed all the usual incidents of a prolonged and half-hearted

campaign: sickness and lack of the necessities of war; a feeling in the army that it was being wasted upon a futile undertaking, while the enemy against whom it was supposed to be operating was elsewhere gaining success upon success; and a vague desire that an end of some kind should be put to the existing condition of things. The King, who was still on the scene of action, was, as usual, rapidly impressed by the state of feeling around him; and, though still at heart desirous of adhering to the Alliance, was induced to make use of the conjuncture for a stroke of political *finesse*. While, on both the Upper and Lower Rhine, the French arms were carrying everything before them, Prussia (to put it briefly) signified to her Ally that, as a condition of adhering to the Alliance she exacted a "compensation" of territory in Poland nearly twice as large in amount as that originally claimed, and a repayment—in one way or another—of the expenses already incurred in the War. This handsome offer, known as the Merle Note—from the Belgian village where Frederick William II dictated its terms—in truth meant the announcement of the break-up of the Austro-Prussian Alliance, and the beginning of the third and last period of the foreign policy of the reign. A few months later—in January, 1793—Russia and Prussia concluded the Treaty which settled the Second Partition of Poland. The two Powers bound one another to seek the adhesion of Austria; but, whereas their "compensations," or acquisitions of territory, were to be carried out at once (Prussian troops shortly afterwards entered Poland, and were speedily followed by Russian), the "satisfaction" of Austria was left over to a more remote future.



For a brief space of time, it seemed—we are now in the year 1793—as if, in spite of this faithless conduct of Prussia, the force of events would still keep together the Alliance of the two German Powers against the Revolution. In France, the Revolution had cast down before its adversaries a gauntlet dripping with royal blood; and, ere the year was out, Paris and the greater part of France were under the Terror. Dumouriez, who held the command in the Low Countries, was a Girondist, and his designs for overthrowing the Government of the Mountain were, of course, in favour of the Allies, among whom Great Britain was now included. During the earlier part of the year, Prussia seemed, once more, disposed to take an active part in warlike operations. But, notwithstanding that the capitulation of Mainz left the whole of the Allied forces free to act against the common enemy, the Coalition proved to be, in truth, as far from united as ever; and when, in the autumn of this year 1793, a transformation of the entire course of the War was effected by the great wave of French popular enthusiasm (how much of that enthusiasm was forced and how much fictitious, the present is not an occasion for enquiring) it broke down no rock, but overwhelmed a bank of sand.

So far at least as, in the winter 1793–4, the Prussian conduct of the War was concerned, this figure cannot be asserted to be inapposite. The King, whose ardour, after cooling in the usual way, had been, to a certain degree, rekindled by the excesses of the Revolution, was now once more full of uncertainty and hesitation; and a strong party in favour of peace was pressing him to conclude a separate arrangement with France.

These advisers, Haugwitz, Lucchesini and Manstein, may be regarded as the nucleus of the party which during the next eleven or twelve years was to direct the foreign policy of Prussia. Its guiding motives were a consistent timidity towards France (even when the policy of France was transparent, and by no means misunderstood at Berlin), and an equally consistent hope to land what spoils could be landed from the troubled waters on the Prussian frontier-line. At the present moment, their chief anxiety was directed towards bringing home Prussia's share of the gains promised by the Treaty of January 1793, which settled the Second Partition of Poland. Russia's gains were in extent more than fourfold those of Prussia<sup>1</sup>; but these latter were considerable enough to warrant their being constituted a separate province of the kingdom, exclusive of the great mercantile port of Danzig and the important military position of Thorn, which were to be incorporated in Frederick the Great's acquisition of West Prussia. Nothing was wanting to the establishment of a lawful ownership, except the sanction of the Polish Diet, which Catharine's representative, General Count J. J. von Sievers—one of the mildest-mannered men, if one may so say, who ever took part in the perpetration of a great historical crime—had easily brought to pass in the case of the far more extensive cessions to Russia. At last—through Sievers, i.e., through Russia—the Polish Diet was induced to acquiesce in the Prussian acquisitions likewise; and thus, through

<sup>1</sup> Over 5000, to about 1200, square geographical miles. As to *The Second Partition of Poland*, see a later paper (27) reprinted in the present volume.

the aid of Russia simply and solely, a solid gain had been achieved, while the War in the west was still half aimlessly drifting along its course.

What, hereupon, determined the conduct of Prussia in the matter of that Western War? We find Frederick William II, at last resolute to make no further sacrifices on behalf of a cause in which he had engaged his own and his country's honour, quitting his army in the west, in order to enjoy at Berlin the reception accorded him in honour of his bloodless conquests in Poland, and instructing the army which he left behind him on the Middle Rhine to abstain from serious operations. It is true that the commander, the Duke of Brunswick, found himself obliged to gain a victory over Hoche (Kaiserslautern, November 29-30th); but he obeyed orders by refraining from using it, and then, disgusted with everything that concerned this unlucky War, resigned his command. The Prussian Government now refused to continue its cooperation in the War, unless subsidised by the other members of the Coalition; till at last, after an earlier proposal of a rather preposterous nature had been unanimously rejected by those concerned, an arrangement was brought forward by the British Ambassador at Berlin, the celebrated Lord Malmesbury, according to which Prussia was to receive, in return for an army of 100,000 men, a subsidy of two million sterling, of which Great Britain should furnish two-fifths, and Austria, Russia and the United Provinces one-fifth each. It would, I think, be unjust to attribute Prussia's assent to this scheme to simple greed; a close enquiry into the financial condition of Prussia at this time, concerning which I gave some

hints in my second lecture, shows that she was not able, unassisted, to bear the further strain of the War, and her statesmen were unequal to a rapid development of her resources by the skilful utilisation of the new possessions acquired by the State. But Austria refused to have anything to say to the proposal. The jealousy of her statesmen—or, if you will, the jealousy of Thugut, who was now the real director of her affairs—had been provoked by the Russo-Prussian Treaty for the repartition of Poland, in which Austrian interests had been left out in the cold; and the Emperor was not prepared to subsidise so disloyal an Estate of the Empire. But, unless I mistake the evidence on a passage of diplomatic history which is as obscure as it is important, Thugut, while resenting the conduct of Prussia, was prepared to outvie it. In other words, the Austrian Government made secret offers to the Russian of a close Alliance, if it would, in its turn, abandon that of Prussia: the old intimacy of the days of Joseph II was to be revived, and while the repartition of Poland was partly at least undone, the two Imperial Courts would find ample compensation in the east.

Thus, there was every chance of the abrupt withdrawal of the Prussian troops from the western frontier, a break-up of the Austro-Prussian Alliance, and, possibly, a revision of the understanding with Russia into the bargain; and the selfish disputes of the champion Powers of Order would have stood self-confessed before the Revolution which confronted them. But some time was gained through the zeal and the skill of the British diplomatist Lord Malmesbury—a politician whom it is customary to underrate, probably



because of the insight into the pettier motives of human action which his voluminous Reminiscences freely display; but his schooling had rightly taught him how essential to his craft or mystery is the knowledge of human nature. Lord Malmesbury, though he could not patch up the breach between the German Powers, cleverly succeeded in inducing the Prussian Government to hold out a little longer. The Treaty of the Hague, by which Prussia undertook to furnish over 60,000 men, in return for a monthly subsidy of £50,000, besides sums to be paid at the beginning and end of the campaign amounting to £800,000 more, stipulated that the Prussian troops were to be employed according to a military agreement (*d'après un concert militaire*) among the three Contracting Powers. I cannot see how there is room for the faintest doubt but that the intention was to use these troops for the War in Flanders; and, for that matter, Count Haugwitz, who negotiated the Treaty on the Prussian side, personally gave his assent to their being employed in this way. But, in point of fact, after the Treaty had been concluded, and Prussia had pocketed part of the subsidies, her Government refused to admit the obligation of moving its troops north from the Middle Rhine, though a victory gained by Möllendorff at the opening of the campaign removed all military pretext for hesitation. You know the end of the campaign. Our army was driven behind the Scheldt; the Austrians moved behind the Rhine; Möllendorff and the Prussians stood still in their camp, which had become a hotbed of intrigue. Thus, the left bank of the Rhine was lost. Great Britain would not continue to pay subsidies, and

it is instructive to see how, to this day, elaborate attempts are made to invert the actual sequence of things, and to represent our conduct as capricious and provocative of much mistrust in our ally. Lord Malmesbury's standard of morality was, as I have hinted, not a very elevated one; but the refreshing vigour of his indignation on this occasion has in it no element of uncertainty.

Very possibly, the Prussian Government would not have ignored the patent sense of the Treaty of the Hague, and thus produced a coldness of feeling between Prussia and the only Great Power with which she had not been at issue since the days of Frederick the Great, had not, to all appearance, the nemesis of her Polish policy already descended upon her in the spring of this year 1794. Kosciuszko—a name which stirred the blood of our fathers and which happily to this day remains virtually untouched by detraction,—had raised the banner of revolt in Cracow, and, a month later, Warsaw was free, and the insurrection had spread over Prussian as well as Russian Poland. After some delay, a Prussian army, with the King at its head, was in the field and besieging Warsaw; but, as I said in a previous lecture, it was on this occasion that the defects which had begun to find their way into the Prussian military system first became seriously manifest; and, tired out and disappointed by his want of success, the King, before long, returned home, leaving an incompetent commander behind him. Thus, though the suppression of the revolt was effected in the interim, it was really effected by Russian, and not by Prussian, arms; and the power and self-trust of Catharine had never been raised higher, while her sense of the importance of the

Prussian Alliance had correspondingly suffered. If, therefore, in 1795, a change became perceptible in the relations of Russia to the two German Powers; if, in the further schemes of aggrandisement in which her triumph caused her immediately to engage, Catharine began to rely upon the cooperation of Austria rather than of Prussia—Prussia had herself to thank for the result. The Polish insurrection and Suwaroff's successful suppression of it had made a Third Partition inevitable; Kosciusko was a captive; the End of Poland had come; and, in accomplishing the consummation, there was no reason why the Tsarina should take thought, first and foremost, of an Ally whose assistance had of late so closely approached failure. While arriving at an understanding with both the German Powers as to the future of the Polish territory, and if possible keeping both these Powers, so long as might be, at war with revolutionary France, Russia was naturally most interested to be on good terms with Austria, from whose jealousy she had so much to apprehend in eastern Europe. Thither, Polish affairs being settled, Russian policy must henceforth once more direct its chief attention.

So much seems to me obvious; and we know, as a matter of fact, that Russia and Austria now became very intimate, and thus, at the beginning of 1795, Austria and Russia concluded a Treaty concerning Poland which, precisely in the sense of the policy I have just been indicating, allotted to Prussia a smaller share in the Third Partition than was secured by either of the Imperial Courts (the acquisitions, which included Warsaw and were designated by the name of New-

East-Prussia were, as you know, not permanently incorporated in the Prussian monarchy). The fact of these negotiations cannot have failed to exercise an influence upon the policy of Prussia, who may have suspected that the renewed intimacy between her Allies had, as in former times, ulterior aims. But, though the Treaty contained an agreement of this description, and included, moreover, a mutual promise of assistance against any possible attack from Prussia, these clauses were secret—they have, indeed, only been made known within the last twenty years; they could not, therefore, have exercised a direct influence upon the action of Prussian policy: nay, had they been known, it is more than doubtful whether they could have been interpreted in the light either of a menace or of a serious danger. In short, after a tolerably close examination of the matter, I am not satisfied that it was, properly speaking, any actual *fear* of the Austro-Russian Alliance which determined Prussia, in this year 1795, to set the seal upon the hesitating and pusillanimous policy she had pursued since she had unsheathed her sword against the Revolution, by concluding peace with the Revolutionary Power. Nor do I believe that she concluded this Peace—the Peace of Bâle—simply in order that Austria might not anticipate her and come to terms with France beforehand. The proof of any such design having at this time been actually entertained by Austria is, to my mind, likewise wanting.

Thus, then, the Peace of Bâle, whereby Prussia agreed to withdraw her troops from the Rhine and leave her possessions on the left bank of the river in the hands of the French, is not to be palliated as imposed upon



Prussia by the supreme law of all policy—self-preservation. Nor (though I have no time to dwell on this) can it be excused by the sanguine expectation of Hardenberg, that, by setting an example to the other Estates of the Empire, Prussia's procedure would augment her influence among them; and that, if the Empire concluded peace, Austria could not fail to do the same—Prussia's ally being thus, after all, led to follow her lead. Any such hope, if it was cherished, was frustrated by the interpretation which Austrian statesmanship at once put upon Prussia's conduct—an interpretation unwarranted, but not unnatural: that the Treaty of Bâle concealed a deep design against Austria herself. In my judgment, this fatal Peace was due, in the first instance and above all, to Prussia's sense of isolation, caused by the vacillations of policy which I have attempted to describe, and which had successively alienated from her Russia, Austria and Great Britain. It was due, secondly, to her fear that an unfortunate result of the War might jeopardise her Polish acquisitions, which, by the agreement with Russia and Austria signed later in the year, she was about permanently to increase. It was due, thirdly, to an immediate want of money, which caused those who best knew the condition of the public treasury and of the King's private resources (Wöllner himself, for one, if I do not mistake) to urge peace upon the King. It was due, finally, to the skilful persistency with which French policy had dangled before the eyes of Prussian statesmen a bait that seemed well worth the sacrifices on the left bank of the Rhine—to wit, Hanover, the annexation of which could hardly be denied to be almost as "necessary" to

the legitimate consolidation of the Prussian monarchy as West-Prussia itself.

I confess that I can hardly read with patience ingenious demonstrations designed to show that by this Peace, of which the pusillanimity was very ineffectively tempered by speculations of possible future profit, Prussia was really returning to her ancient line of policy—that of alliance with the Power from whom, in the period before the Seven Years' War, she was estranged by the wiles of Kaunitz and the clique of Madame de Pompadour. Such an apology, futile in itself, is rendered doubly so by the remembrance that the France with which Prussia had virtually joined hands at Bâle was a different France from that of Lewis XV. A year or two later, on the occasion of the solemn act of homage—the typical ceremony of the ancient scheme of government—tendered by the Estates of Brandenburg to the new King Frederick William III, much awkwardness of feeling was provoked by an unexpected apparition. Among Prittwitzes and Itzenplitzes—among the conscious representatives, in powder and plumes, of a nobility or squirearchy which might affect a touch of French fashions and might court contact with French ideas, but which, at heart, could not contemplate any serious change in the character of the monarchy of which it had hitherto been the mainstay—there stood a gaunt figure in simple black garb, with the tricolour wound round it by way of credentials. This was the Ambassador of the French Republic, the Constitution-maker Sieyès, who had voted *sans phrase* for the death of King Lewis. Socially speaking, he was not a *persona gratissima* at

the Prussian Court, any more than he was to the excellent Josephine, who called him her husband's *bête-noire*; but it is hardly too much to say that, during the remainder of the reign of Frederick William II, his was the most authoritative influence in the foreign policy of the Government at Berlin. His purpose, which he was the first to express with that *netteté* which is the privilege of French republican diplomatists, was to drive Prussia as well as Austria as far back as might be from the French frontier, allowing them such compensations as might be found elsewhere, but erecting, where possible, between France and them a barrier of smaller, or 'buffer' States more or less jealous of their respective preeminence. Haugwitz saw through this policy, and made some feeble attempts, which I pass by, at breaking through the relation established by the Peace of Bâle, and demanding back the left bank of the Rhine. But, partly in remembrance of the failure of both his Belgian and Polish campaigns, partly paralysed by a physical weakness which ultimately became moral impotence, and, to some extent, under the influence of those French surroundings to which I have likewise previously adverted, the King refused to listen to these faint and feeble warnings. Frederick William II's reign came to a close with the adoption of a so-called system of absolute neutrality.

Absolute neutrality! At a time when all the conflicting interests in Europe were about to engage in a renewed and deadlier struggle against one another; at a time when the Power which in the successive adjustments of those interests played the part of arbiter was about to fall under the guidance of a single strong and

unflinching will—what could absolute neutrality mean? Its real meaning was abstention from resistance to the forces which overthrew the old edifice bit by bit, and abstention from the Second Coalition of 1799, as afterwards from the Third Coalition of 1805; but it likewise implied (which was less befitting) a vigilant promptitude to gather up the fragments which each successive shock scattered abroad. So, when after Lunéville the Empire was put into the cauldron, and so again, in 1805, when after the great day of Austerlitz Prussia accepted the exchange of possessions of less importance for the long-coveted acquisition of Hanover. It is a protracted and tortuous story, that of the years between the Peace of Bâle and the War of 1806—declared so desperately, at so ill-chosen a moment and for so uninspiring a cause; but its general drift—if you will, its general moral—can hardly remain obscure, even if we read it as narrated by Hardenberg. For Hardenberg, whom Napoleon's hostile treatment towards the close of this period converted into as bitter a personal foe as it found and left Stein, viewed his own earlier career in the light of his later, and forgot that, in the years after the Peace of Bâle, when even Haugwitz trembled at Prussia's rapid transition from neutrality into subservience, he—Hardenberg—had been the opportunist who justified every step by its momentary safety and the direct gain which it implied.

In conclusion, I would once more apologise for the incompleteness of this lecture, as of the incompleteness of the course to which you have so kindly listened, were it not that this very defect may serve a useful purpose. In dealing with such a problem as the



beginning of a new epoch in the history of a great nation, which, more or less, coincided with the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the Western world at large, my colleague will pursue his own method, as he will arrive at his own conclusions. I shall be content if my lectures have merely helped to point to this single conclusion: that for the regeneration of Germany something more was required than the leadership of the Prussia of Frederick the Great's successor, which itself needed to be regenerated through and by means of the greater whole to which it belonged. It would be misleading to insist, except as just upon a suggestive fact, that hardly one of the men who, from Stein downwards, made the new Prussia was himself a born subject of that monarchy—the exception of William von Humboldt may be said to prove the rule; but it is not idle to aver that in a deeper and fuller sense, Prussia by herself could hardly have accomplished her recovery. Inspired with new purposes, impregnated with a new life, the Prussian State was easily able to excel, once more, in those qualities in which it had excelled so long that we can hardly refrain from regarding them as continuously characteristic of it. But, had its civil administration been even more effectively organised, its army more thoroughly trained, and its foreign policy more keenly vigilant than they actually were, they would not have sufficed of themselves to fit the monarchy of Frederick William II for its mighty destinies, any more than they were able to preserve it from a decline 'so difficult to believe compatible with them. History, I take it, is not often easy to read; and, though we may do well to follow its move-

ments so far as we can in the full breadth of their sweep, it is also now and then instructive to trace them wave-wise, both as they recede and as they advance, and to be content if the one page which we have tried to read of the book has more or less plainly, and more or less fairly, told its part of the tale<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It would be out of keeping with the plan of the present publication, were an attempt made to indicate the authorities on which this course of lectures was based. But they could not have been written without constant reference, in the case of the first and second of them, to M. Philippson's *Geschichte des Preussischen Staatswesens vom Tode Friedrich's des Grossen bis zu den Freiheitskriegen* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1880-2), and, in that of the third, to H. von Sybel's *Geschichte der Revolutionszeit* (5 vols., Düsseldorf, 1859, etc.; Eng. Tr., 1867-9). Of Sybel's great work the present writer contributed a review to the *Quarterly Review* of October, 1870—a number which, as the then Editor afterwards was pleased to remark, contained no article which made for Germany.

## 26. SIXTY-NINE YEARS AT THE PRUSSIAN COURT (COUNTESS VOSS)<sup>1</sup>

(*The Manchester Guardian*, December 6, 1875)

WE do not know whether the volume before us, to which we desire to call the attention of our readers, already commands at home the success it deserves and is surely destined to achieve. It is certainly no general predilection for the memoirs of Courts and courtiers which makes us anxious that its publication should not pass by unnoticed; for Court gossip is no better than other gossip, and Court scandal is often quite as bad as other scandal. Nor is there anything of present political importance to be gathered from these pages. Their interest is, accordingly, of a less pungent kind than that attaching to the terribly indiscreet pamphlet which has recently shed so glaring, if imperfect, a light over the sayings and doings of certain "all-highest" as well as "highest" personages at Berlin; and it is obviously with the sanction of those most nearly connected with its reminiscences that the most interesting narrative of Prussian Court life with which we are acquainted has been given to the world. The memoirs of a lady whose experience of that Court began in the days of Frederick the Great's father and who lived to see the present German Emperor (William I) "wonderfully grown, looking very well, and

<sup>1</sup> *Neunundsechzig Jahre am Preussischen Hofe*. Aus den Erinnerungen der Oberhofmeisterin Sophie Marie Gräfin von Voss. Leipzig, 1876. (Engl. Trans. by E. and A. Stephenson, 2 vols. 1876.)

behaving very nicely," would in any case be welcomed by historical students. But Countess Voss's memoirs are something more than a collection of historical materials. Not only was her intelligence equal to her opportunities, and her loyal patriotism as ardent in the Napoleonic days of her old age as in the Frederician days of her youth; but the story of her life is one of true personal nobility, of a self-sacrifice which is at times to be found in the Court as well as in the camp, and of a devotion such as no ribbon of the Black Eagle, no titles or honours of any kind, could have repaid. Thus, her name deserves to be remembered by the side of others engraven in every patriotic German heart, by the side of that of Queen Louisa herself, whose faithful friend and companion she was in the darkest days of Prussia and of the House of Hohenzollern. In the limited space at our command we cannot make these assertions good; but we will endeavour to say enough to induce some of our readers to turn to the book itself, or to join in our cordial hope that it may speedily be translated for the benefit of the English public at large.

Sophia Maria von Pannewitz was born in the year 1729, the daughter of a Prussian General who had received at Malplaquet a gloriously conspicuous wound, and whose sovereign never failed to make him the object of special distinction on the anniversary of that famous battle. When she was a child of eleven years of age, her beauty was already such as to attract the notice of King Frederick William I, who had his soft moments and was not always measuring the inches of his grenadiers. His offer to kiss the pretty child on the stairs was met



by her in a way not very usual at Courts, but the King forgave the box-on-the-ears which he carried off from the adventure. Fräulein von Pannewitz soon afterwards was attached to the household of the Queen Consort, the daughter of our George I, and in 1743 was appointed a lady-in-waiting. This, however, was already in the reign of Frederick the Great, whose Wars at once required the services of the Pannewitz family. The old General was overtaken by illness while doing his duty, and, on the King enquiring after his health from his daughter, "He is better," she answered, "through the mercy of God." The King turned away, observing, "How very innocent she must still be to talk of God in the matter."

The poor girl had reason enough before long to seek strength and comfort in a region of thoughts to which King Frederick II was a stranger. The personal tragedy of her life is soon told. King Frederick's brother and heir-apparent, Prince Augustus William, fell hopelessly in love with the young beauty, and urged his attentions upon her with a passionate eagerness the more difficult to resist because in her heart—but never outwardly—she returned his affection. There was but one way of escape from the situation, and this she took with a courage most honourable to her. On her birthday in 1751—a day she thenceforth remembered as "in every respect one of the most terrible of her life"—she gave her hand to her cousin, a young diplomat, and with him quitted the Court. To Count Voss, under trials to which a perfectly groundless jealousy seems to have exposed her, she remained a faithful wife; and, so far as it would appear, she never saw the Prince again

after he had been carried away in a fainting-fit from her wedding ceremony, which he had insisted upon attending. But her heart remained true to him even after his unhappy life had closed, and she gave his Christian names to her eldest son and her grandson. During the gloom and bitterness of his last days she suffered with him at a distance. It is known how the Prince of Prussia incurred the displeasure of the King by his mismanagement of a most important military movement early in the Seven Years' War; and how, after in vain demanding a court-martial, he died soon afterwards in sorrow and despair. The letter is preserved in which a sympathising friend told Countess Voss the story of his death.

During the greater part of the Seven Years' War the Countess resided at Magdeburg, where her husband had been appointed to the Presidency of the Government. In the later years of the great War, this city unexpectedly became the residence of the ladies of the Prussian Court, while it was at the same time full of soldiers, diplomatic agents, and prisoners of distinction, all of whom mingled in the society of the place. During these years, the Countess kept a brief diary, which gives a curious insight into the life of which she formed part. Of all her periods of Court experience this was the most trying; for though she found a loving friend in the charming Princess Henry—"la belle fée," as she was called in the hide-and-seek language of the times—other great ladies to whose temper she had to accommodate her own would have furnished materials for less pleasing comments to a less discreet chronicler. There was the Princess Amalia, whose name will at

once call up that of her ill-fated lover, Baron Trenck. The uses of his adversity, which her devoted endeavours at last succeeded in bringing to a temporary close, had not sweetened her disposition, and her brother, Prince Henry, bestowed on her the name of "*la fée malfaisante*." But Princess Amalia's whims were less difficult to bear than those of the Queen, King Frederick's uncongenial consort. She seems to have been what is intolerable even in a Queen—albeit (to quote Mr Carlyle's "Demon Newswriter") "the best woman in the world." Her passion for alone knowing the true news and discoursing on it at length occasionally drove even Countess Voss to despair, and left her "quite dead with *ennui*." Thus, amidst hopes and fears, the latter largely predominating, and amidst endless games at piquet and comet and trifet, the weary days passed; and at last victory came, and peace, and the Countess and her husband followed the Court to Berlin, where he was soon appointed to the highest charge near the person of the Queen.

With the new reign—that of Frederick William II which opened in 1786—began a period of anxiety, and in one respect of bitter sorrow, for the Countess. The new King was the son of Prince Augustus William, and the affection both loyal and personal she entertained for him was heightened by the charm of manner and the amiability of disposition he had inherited from his unfortunate father. But King Frederick William II had, likewise, inherited from his father a weakness of which the results descended with fatal cruelty upon the family of his friend. Unhappy in his marriage, and under the control of a low-born mistress, which he was unable to shake off even when under the influence of other passions, he set law, reason, and morality at defiance

in the pursuit of his ends. He had fallen in love with Julia, the niece of Countess Voss, and though it seemed as if he were beginning to grow weary of her at the very time when he had at last conquered her heart, he adhered to his purpose, and married her morganatically while his wife was still alive. Indeed, it was the Queen who with other adversaries of the reigning mistress of the King (Countess Lichtenau), in the hope of destroying her ascendancy, persuaded Julia von Voss to consent to this strange step. The precedent which was found for it may not be known to many of our readers; but it is historical nevertheless, and constitutes (as Bossuet took care to note) one of the most extraordinary episodes in the history of the German Reformation. Philip of Hesse, however, was only once married twice, if we may thus express it; King Frederick William II, after the death of Julia Voss, which supervened so early as 1789, appears to have repeated the process.

“How can one excuse all this?” mildly demands Countess Voss. Yet the experience had been a bitter one to her; and it is with pleasure we turn to the next page of her reminiscences, though this, too, was to be overshadowed by grief and anxiety, but of a very different description. On the engagement of the Crown-prince—afterwards King Frederick William III—to the Princess Louisa of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the Countess, now a widow, was appointed Mistress of the Robes to the young Princess, with whose history her own henceforth becomes inseparably interwoven. The affection which she conceived for the youthful bride she proved by long years of unfaltering devotion; and here her love fell on a noble soil, and helped to bear the fairest fruits. The Crown-prince himself was, not-



withstanding the reflexions which have been justly cast upon much that he did or left undone, a true-hearted man and a patriot; and in the days of adversity which befell him as King, as in the days of the great Liberation, he conducted himself worthily of his house and of his country. In Countess Voss's Diary may be once more read the story of the bitter humiliations which the royal family of Prussia had to undergo in the days of calamity and exile, and of the heroism with which these sufferings were borne by the Queen and—why should we not add?—by her ever faithful friend and comforter. The latter will be pardoned her hatred of Napoleon, of whom she draws a picture which borders upon caricature. "He is," she says, "strikingly ugly, a fat, swollen, brown face, and, at the same time, he is corpulent, short, and quite without figure; his great round eyes roll about weirdly, the expression of his features is hardness; he looks like the incarnation of success." But we are unable to do more than indicate the nature of the interest this part of her Reminiscences possesses—bringing before us as they do a scene of Court life of which the moral needs no interpretation. For us those cold, dark days in the Ultima Thule of the Baltic seem to live in her pages—and we see the poor King "always unwell and terribly sad and out of spirits"; "when he speaks his mind, it goes through one's heart";—and the Queen, active and courageous and full of plans in the midst of her troubles, her anxiety, and her moments of despair—and the good old lady amusing the children and writing her appeal to Napoleon, and trudging through the snow to perform her duties after a fashion which might not have proved endurable to every Mistress of the Robes.

Countess Voss survived her "angel Queen," and to her it was granted to see the days of hope recovered and of victory, as it seemed, finally accomplished. She lived to her eighty-sixth year, and died rather suddenly on the last day of 1814. It need hardly be said that, in her last years, she had come to be looked upon as a member rather than a servant of the royal family, and that every honour had been conferred upon her which could give her distinction or pleasure. She is the only woman who has ever worn the ribbon of the Black Eagle, and the sentinels had to present arms to her as to the royal Princesses. The King treated her with a charming familiarity, to which their common sorrow for the memory of the Queen lent a deeper meaning, and allowed her to make him the victim of the occasional sallies of her harmless, but not pointless, wit. To the last, however, she never forgot the nature of her office, and insisted upon *les bienséances*; would not allow the King to allow one of his daughters to drive in a sleigh unaccompanied by a Prince or the Master of the Horse, and, in general, carried out the principles she had formerly laid down in MS. on the theme of "A Mistress of the Robes as she ought to be." We will spare our readers her remarks as to conversation and demeanour, including her theory of curtsies (which ought to be performed with the knees, and not with the head "as is now done"), and conclude by citing one of her maxims, to which her life forms the best comment:—"With her whole heart and whole soul she must be devoted to the princess to whose person she is attached." The heart, it will be seen, *n'est pas pour rien* in the conduct and career of such a courtier as the Countess Voss.

## 27. THE SECOND PARTITION OF POLAND<sup>1</sup>

*The English Historical Review*, October, 1916

THE cause of Poland owed no effective aid to British statesmanship, from the time of Pitt's passivity in 1792 to that of Lord Russell's *non possumus* in 1863; and there was very cold comfort in the words which, as we learn from Mr Buckle's new volume, Disraeli used in the House of Commons: "If the partition of Poland was a great crime, it was a crime shared by the Polish people, as their national existence could not have been destroyed without some faults on their side." Students of history who have contented themselves with this kind of self-complacent judgment and the grain of truth which it contains, will do well to read Dr Lord's monograph, and more especially the introductory part of it, which deals with "the unfortunate historic evolution of the Polish constitution," together with the very remarkable chapters treating of the beginnings of national revival, and of the attempted realisation of them in the Constitution of the third of May. Dr Lord justly holds that the history of the Second Partition of Poland, which is his proper theme (although he carries it forward in some respects to the much debated ground of the negotiations which ended in the Third Partition), cannot be understood when viewed as a mere episode

<sup>1</sup> *The Second Partition of Poland; a Study in Diplomatic History*. By Robert Howard Lord, Ph.D. (*Harvard Historical Studies*, No. xxiii. Cambridge, U.S.A.: Harvard University Press, 1915.)

in the history of the Revolutionary War, or as a result of the transactions (the reverse of complete) between the Eastern Powers down to the time of the Russo-Prussian Convention of January 1793. To these transactions Dr Lord has given full attention; and those who can call to mind the controversies of a past generation, in which the conclusions of Sybel's great book on the Revolutionary Epoch were impugned by Hüffer and others and defended by the eminent author with no measured scorn, will readily acknowledge the use made in the present volume of the new sources, and of the new historical works, Polish and Russian in particular, which have been open to the use of its writer. He has thus produced one of the most notable diplomatic studies that have been recently published, and one which does great credit to the historical school of which he is a member. But it is in the passages to which I have referred that the special value of his work seems to lie. In the midst of strife and warfare, we are so apt to pass perfunctory judgments on the historical and political communities around us, that we may well pause to reconsider, in the light of impartial research, the popular verdict, "all their own fault," often thought a sufficient explanation of the doom of what, before the Partitions, was the third largest of European States—and what remains, in our own day, a great nationality, with an unfathomable future.

The constitutional history of Poland in modern times comprises a long period of decline, followed by a very brief time of reform. During the former, in the words of Professor Höttsch, one of the chief living authorities on the age of Catharine II, Poland made



the vain "attempt to play the part of a Great Power of the modern type with only the resources of a medieval feudal State." The Polish type of polity was only an exaggeration of the kind of State implied; indeed, the *liberum veto*, which to many critics symbolises the anarchy of Polish constitutional life (and excusably so, since of fifty-five Diets held between 1652 and 1764, not less than forty-eight were "exploded" by the vote of a single deputy), was merely an exaggerated application of the idea common to medieval parliamentarism, or the system of Estates, that the vote of a majority cannot bind a minority. "In Catalonia, for instance, a single nobleman by uttering the words '*Yo dissent*' could stop the proceedings of the Cortes." The essential difference in the evolution of Polish constitutional life lies, of course, in the fact that, in Poland, neither did the Crown ultimately prevail over the Estates nor Parliament over the Crown, but a single class over all the rest. The triumph of the *szlachta*, composed of a handful of great families, and of what it is hardly an exaggeration to describe as an "aristocratic proletariat," was primarily due to their exemption from all taxes and all public duties except unpaid military service, and was assured by the strange abasement of the towns, the cruel degradation of the peasantry, and the gradual exclusion of the clergy from the Diets, while the higher positions in the Church were absorbed by the aristocracy. A curious, but very natural consequence of the monopolisation of political power by the country gentry was that, as a matter of fact, it was not the Diets that were supreme in the land, but the *Dietines*, or local assemblies—which, as *Dietines* of

*Relation*, received the reports of deputies as to the fulfilment of their mandates, and not unfrequently modified the conclusions of the larger body. And not less disastrous than the evil of the mandate-system and the constant use of the *liberum veto* was the corrective applied to it. This was the system of *Confederations*, through which the republic was ultimately brought to its fall—for it was the malcontent magnates (one cannot quite see why Dr Lord calls them *émigrés*), who were the authors of the Confederation of Targowice that threw themselves and their country into the tender embraces of Catharine II. This system was anti-constitutional in its very origin and essence, a device of *ἐταίρῑαι* formed for the carrying through of party objects either in an interregnum, or on behalf of the King, or, more commonly, against him. The royal authority thus became little more than a tool that could be used or abused and, even in the hands of a Sovereign ambitious both of increasing his authority and of recovering for Poland the place she had held in Europe in times long past, merely served to add a certain dignity to the national collapse.

King Stanislas Leszczynski, with all his amiability, seems to have foreseen the humiliation, far more bitter than that which closed his own ephemeral reign, reserved for his namesake, the unhappy King Stanislas Augustus. But he could hardly have foreseen the great movement for reform of which yet a third Stanislas—whose name is probably to be found in few western histories, though, according to Dr Lord, his own book had an unexampled success—was a literary embodiment. Stanislas Stuszcic, in 1785, denounced

the *liberum veto*, and demanded the establishment of hereditary monarchy and a permanent Diet, besides a full series of military, judicial, and industrial reforms, and the abolition of serfdom. In the idea of Reform there was nothing new for Poland, which, it should always be remembered, had shown itself remarkably open to the influences of both Renaissance and Reformation; the marvel would rather lie in the completeness and thoroughness of what rapidly became the programme of the whole nationalist party—the Patriots, whose demands swayed the great Diet of 1788 to 1793—were we to forget the age in which that Diet held its sittings. Of the soundness and salutariness of these reforms there can be little question; but had Poland the inner strength necessary for carrying them? The answer to this question is not to be given rashly, and should certainly not be based only on the abundant pictures of Polish social demoralisation at our service. The four years' Diet, which represented the growth of the desire for political reform during the two decades (or thereabouts) that had passed since the hard lesson of the First Partition, knew its own mind in spite of the turmoil of conflicting factions; and the plan of reform adopted at Warsaw, both in what it rejected and in what it proposed to add (the principle of hereditary kingship *imprimis*), amounted to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy of the modern type. The misfortune of the Diet was that it failed, and that the Constitution passed by it *en bloc* on the famous third of May served no purpose but that of becoming a stone of offence to Poland's worst enemies. For Russia turned against Poland and her monarchical

reform so soon as the Turkish War was at an end, and Prussia had only waited for the moment when Russia should set herself against the Constitution to join in the denunciation of it and in the endeavour to put an end to the beginnings of the new political life of the doomed republic. The conduct of Austria is, as usual in these transactions, less easy to describe in brief. In Dr Lord's opinion, no doubt may be held to remain as to Sybel's failure to prove his assertion that the Emperor Leopold II had a hand in preparing the *coup d'état*, of which the adoption of the old Constitution formed part; while it is equally certain that the Emperor exerted himself actively to secure the general recognition of that charter by the Powers. But, after Leopold's death, and after Austria had felt herself obliged to seek the alliance of Prussia for her campaign in the west, the note of Austrian policy changed, and the two German Powers undertook in future to guarantee not *the* Free Constitution, but *a* free Constitution for Poland—so that Russia's hands were untied.

Space fails me to follow Dr Lord through the mazes of the negotiations which from the middle of 1792 onwards prepared and led up to the Second Partition of Poland. The policy of Russia and that of Prussia were dictated by lust of territory, the one governing motive, as Dr Lord truly remarks, of the diplomacy of the age. In the case of Catharine II, it is futile to suppose the cooperation of the sentiment of nationality, or of religious sympathies, or indeed of any sentiment except such as was still inspired by Potemkin, the self-designated King of Dacia. In the case of Prussia and her fitfully ambitious King, Frederick William II, the



desire to *arrondir* the frontiers of Frederick the Great had become the political gospel of the men—Haugwitz, Lucchesini, and the rest—who, without being bound by systematic designs like those of Hertzberg, directed the foreign policy of the kingdom in the latter part of the reign and for some years beyond. The great mercantile port of Danzig and the important military position of Thorn were advantages in no event to be missed, and the balance between German and Polish nationality in the Prussian State was not so dangerously affected as in the Third Partition. Austria, on the contrary, after gaining the whole of Galicia in the First Partition, fluctuated both in her policy and in her immediate purposes; and, as has been said, when she had again thrown in her lot with the despoilers, she found herself at last with her bird—the time-honoured project of the Bavaro-Belgian Exchange—still in the bush, while her German Ally had his in the hand. This was clear to the Emperor himself, and Cobenzl and Spielmann were dismissed from office, making room for Thugut, who, having failed to modify the conditions of the Second Partition, addressed himself to the preparation of the Third. Into his examination of the earlier phases of the career of this statesman—a Kaunitz of far lesser calibre—it would be interesting to follow the author of this volume; but I have already exceeded my limits, and my primary purpose has been to direct attention to the internal side of Dr Lord's most interesting narrative.

## 28. THE GIRLHOOD OF QUEEN LOUISA

*(The Cornhill Magazine, October 1900)*

THE figure of Queen Louisa is something between that of a national heroine and that of a popular saint, without possessing any very clearly defined claim to either designation. No wonder, then, that German historians, even when of a grave and critical turn, find it difficult to exclude from their biographies of the Queen those poetic elements which form an integral part of her fame; and that anything but success has attended the efforts of alien scepticism to distinguish between the legend and the facts of her history. Whatever memories they may be invited to dismiss, nothing will make her countrymen forget how this most lovable of Princesses was hated by Napoleon. A few months after her death, when the widowed King Frederick William III had assured his Ally that Prussia would adhere to him in the impending struggle with Russia, the French Emperor observed to Prince Schwarzenberg that the decease of the Queen was a piece of real good fortune for her country. "Were she still alive, the King would not have dared to make up his mind to this. In matters of business," he continued, "the ideas of chivalrous ladies are always pernicious. Their heart runs away with their reason." The frank malevolence of the saying may hide the usual grain of truth. So far as Queen Louisa was concerned, we have it on her own avowal to Gentz, that she had played no part in politics before the Prussian resolution for war had been taken

in 1806. "God knows," she said to him in the course of their interview at Erfurt, only a few days before the catastrophe at Jena, "that I have never been consulted in public affairs, and never had any ambition that way." And the premature close of her life—which it is no poetic fiction to attribute in part to the sufferings she had undergone, since the day when she had fled "from post to post, pursued by our hussars"—overtook her before the day of the national recovery had so much as dawned. Yet within these narrow limits of time her influence was effectively exerted on more than one important occasion against France, and against the home *régime* under which any renewal of resistance was out of the question; and one of the last "inexpressible" joys of her life was to have successfully contributed to place Hardenberg in office. Still, she is justly revered for what she was, rather than for what she did, during the critical four years of her career; and it was her endurance—an endurance of scorn as well as of sorrow—and the hopefulness to which only a few were capable of rising as she did, which signally helped to sustain King and people in their long days of trial, and were remembered when the hour of liberation had struck at last.

The personal influence of Queen Louisa was, of course, largely owing to the admiration inspired, in prosperity and in adversity alike, by her great personal beauty and irresistible charm of manner. Her exquisite loveliness may be traced, at almost every stage of her life, through the series of portraits in the "Luisenzimmer" of the Hohenzollern Museum, but survives most serenely in the marble of Schadow and Rauch.

As to the combination of vivacity and gentleness which took so many of her contemporaries captive, the testimony of strangers is as eloquent as that of friends. On Napoleon alone it seems to have left no impression at Tilsit, except in so far as to induce him to make a promise on one day which he had fully resolved to break on the next. But it was not her beauty and her grace which only or chiefly made her a Queen of Hearts, both in life and in remembrance. Nothing is so unmistakable in her personality as her sympathy with persons and things beyond the common—a “romantic” sympathy likewise not peculiar to any one epoch, but, in that of Queen Louisa’s youth, freely fed by interests partaking of the very essence of its intellectual life. From this point of view at least, the records of her girlhood go some way towards enabling us better to understand an influence universally acknowledged among her contemporaries, and of a more than transitory historical significance. And even a few brief notes concerning this period of her life may help to show how Queen Louisa must, in some measure, have been enabled to meet the trials of her womanhood by the innocence of her childhood, by the simplicity of her upbringing, and by the unaffected sympathy, inspired in her both by her disposition and by her surroundings, with the intellectual growth of the nation of which she was a daughter. Her education was neither complete nor systematic; her spelling was not as good as might have been expected from a votary of Sophocles and Shakespeare, Schiller and “Agnes von Lilien”; but her training may, after all, have had in it more of the root of the matter than is obvious to an unsentimental age.



From her ancestors on her father's side Princess Louisa of Mecklenburg-Strelitz had inherited few, if any, traditions either popular or poetic. Long before the date of her birth (1776), the two Mecklenburg duchies had settled down into the condition which made them, even within living memory, the chosen home in Germany of feudal privileges and reactionary principles in both Church and State. Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whose population has probably at no time exceeded a hundred thousand souls, was even more purely agricultural than the larger sister-duchy, and, with the exception of an outlying western fragment, lay wedged in between the Pomeranian and Brandenburg provinces of the Prussian monarchy. The dynasty which had held sway there for the better part of a century, if it had done nothing to add to the hoary renown of an ancestry common to both lines, had abstained from emulating the vicious vagaries which made the name of Charles Leopold of Mecklenburg-Schwerin one of the bywords of modern constitutional history. Of the Adolphus Fredericks who succeeded one another at Neu-Strelitz (as the ducal residence of Glienicke, *Anglicè* Claydon, had been renamed early in the century) Queen Louisa's great-uncle, like several members of the family, died in the odour of piety; his younger brother, Charles Lewis Frederick, her grandfather, had, on the other hand, been transiently notorious as something between buffoon and butt to Crown-prince Frederick of Prussia's brilliant little Court in the neighbouring Rheinsberg. His son, another Adolphus Frederick, held sway in Strelitz, in accordance with the precedents of his long-lived line, till 1794, more than ten years after Louisa's

marriage; nor was it till then that her own father, Prince Charles, succeeded his brother in the ducal—which at the Congress of Vienna became the grand-ducal—title.

The finances of the little State lay very low in these years, owing chiefly to the distress in which its proximity to Brandenburg had involved it so far back as the Seven Years' War; and Christoph Albert von Kamptz, a Mecklenburg nobleman, as Stein described him, of the true Philistine breed, found its government no easy task<sup>1</sup>.

In his youth, the future father of Queen Louisa had known wider experiences and interests than had been open to most of his ancestors. He had served in the Portuguese army, under that Count William of Schaumburg-Lippe who, besides being distinguished as a military reformer, is honourably mentioned by Goethe as having set the example to other German Princes of an active interest in the national literature. The marriage, too, of his younger sister Charlotte—the

<sup>1</sup> He was the father of the wellknown Prussian Minister of State, to whose lot it fell in 1810 to attend the remains of Queen Louisa on their removal from Hohenzieritz to Berlin. The younger Kamptz, well known in the days of the Reaction as the director of the Prussian police raids upon demagoguery, was, in the latter years of King Frederick William III's reign, the most useful member of the so-called "Mecklenburg" clique, which represented the ultra-Conservative element in the Prussian Court and Government, and whose most prominent ornaments were Queen Louisa's step-brother, Duke Charles, her sister Frederica, and that Princess's third husband, the 'lamented' Duke of Cumberland (afterwards King Ernest Augustus of Hanover). It was this Duke Charles who in 1837 so bitterly opposed the marriage of Princess Helena of Schwerin to the Duke of Orleans, with whom it was then hoped she would, in course of time, ascend the French Throne as the sixth crowned Queen in the House of Mecklenburg.

“good Queen Charlotte” of our own patriotic annals—cannot but have enlarged his political horizon, without prejudice to King George’s instinct (attested by anecdotes) in choosing her for her public as well as her private virtues. Her Mecklenburg variety of Toryism was not the only trait in which her niece was unlike her and other members of the Obotrite dynasty. Queen Charlotte’s Chamberlain is reported to have noticed in her later days that “the bloom of her ugliness was going off”; but the impression made upon Sir Walter Scott by the “droll” paintings of some of the Mecklenburg-Strelitz Princesses at Windsor suggests that her facial peculiarities were in part inherited. It was bold—but not too bold—of Sir George Jackson, when asked by Queen Charlotte at a Drawing Room whom of her family the Queen of Prussia most resembled, to reply that she bore some likeness to her Majesty.

Inasmuch as Queen Louisa saw nothing of Mecklenburg, and its woods and waters, in her younger days, it is the less to be wondered at that the most characteristic qualities of her maturity should have owed so little to her paternal ancestors. The case was different with her mother’s family. In 1768, Prince Charles married, as his first wife, Princess Frederica of Hesse-Darmstadt, by whom, besides several children that died in infancy, he had one son (George) and four daughters. At the time of the birth of the third of these, the future Queen Louisa, Prince Charles resided at Hanover, with the rank of Field-marshal in command of the troops of the Elector, King George III, and as Governor of his capital. The Prince was then, it may be pointed out, residing not in the villa on the Reitwall, which has so

long been reputed the birthplace of Queen Louisa, but in the electoral (afterwards royal) palace in the Leine-strasse. The structural alterations in the historic building have more or less obscured the local reminiscences associated with it—including those of the tragic catastrophe of Königsmarck. For the rest, there can hardly have been a period in which the civil and military affairs of the Hanoverian electorate were in a condition of more absolute stagnation. Louisa was in her seventh year when her mother died, a few days after the birth of her tenth child, and her father withdrew with his six surviving young children to Herrenhausen. This pleasant suburban retreat, approached by stately avenues, preserves to this day the polite tranquility of its *orangeries* and broad garden-walks, which the old Electress Sophia was wont to pace during so many summers, attended by Leibniz and other less illustrious companions of her solitude.

The education of the Strelitz children appears to have been carried on according to arrangements made in their mother's lifetime; and it must have seemed to them in the nature of things when, two years after her death, their father married her younger sister, Princess Charlotte of Hesse-Darmstadt, as his second wife. She was the godmother of the little Louisa, who was present at the wedding and remained at Darmstadt during the ensuing winter months. Before the end of 1785 Prince Charles's second wife, too, died in childbed; and in the following year he bade farewell to Hanover and its melancholy memories, and settled at Darmstadt, where the care of his young children was entrusted to their widowed grandmother, a born Princess of Leiningen,



and usually known as the Landgravine Marie. Darmstadt, where the future Queen Louisa was to receive the first enduring impressions of her girlhood, was one of the few German Courts which in the latter half of the 18th century took any real interest in intellectual pursuits; but there is no reason for supposing that here, as at Weimar under Anna Amelia and her son Carl August, or at Gotha under Frederick the Great's friend Louisa Dorothea, progressive political ideas connected themselves with the literary sympathies of the dynasty. Besides these, there were some other minor German Courts which in this period showed a more or less active goodwill towards the representatives of a literature no longer appealing mainly or wholly to an exclusive class; and the national culture very distinctly gained by this encouragement.

The Court of Darmstadt seems to have had no very early pretensions to rank among the local centres, if one might say so, of an extension movement not altogether without its hollow places. It was not so very long since the family life at that Court had impressed itself upon the "shrill" Margravine Wilhelmina of Baireuth, rather after the fashion of an Ibsen *intérieur*; but her experiences must have dated from the reign of Landgrave Lewis VIII. Under Lewis IX (1768-90) a change took place. His personal tastes were military, and his disposition was ungenial: and Hardenberg's "Memoirs" give an amusing account of the bad dinners at his Court, and the "old corporals" who conducted its ceremonial. But for many years his sway was tempered by the influence of his consort Caroline, a born Princess of Zweibrücken, whom her

literary contemporaries, including Goethe himself, were accustomed to call the "Great Landgravine," and who merited the designation by her bright and ready sympathy, in the midst of many difficulties and disappointments, with all high intellectual effort. She was an indefatigable correspondent, and kept up an intimate intercourse with many leading personages in both the French and the German world of letters; one of the most attached of her followers, as he had good reason to be, was the cynical Merck, who sorrowed deeply for her death in 1774. The chief pleasures of her life were her visits to Berlin; and how the great King there reciprocated her regard was shown by the inscription on the monument erected by him to her memory: "*fœmina sexu, ingenio vir.*"

Of the Great Landgravine, who thus began the connexion which was to determine the course of Louisa's life, the young Princess can have found traditions only at Darmstadt. All Caroline's daughters had, by this time, long gone forth into the world—the second, Frederica, to become the much-tried Queen of the weakest, though far from the least able, of all the Hohenzollern monarchs, Frederick William II; the fifth, Louisa, to be married to Carl August of Weimar, and to have (with her tale of trials) a share, immortalised in Goethe's *Tasso*, in the incomparable literary glories of his Court. With her brother, afterwards known as Grand-duke Lewis I of Hesse, Goethe first came into contact in his early Frankfort days as a member of a "secret Arcadian" society, which had its headquarters at Offenbach, and whose active archon had induced the young Prince to join it;

their friendly relations were afterwards renewed at Weimar.

These influences had naturally extended to the ladies of the Darmstadt family, with whom the Strelitz Princesses were directly connected; and in former days their grandmother, Landgravine Marie, had introduced their mother and aunts to the animated society of Goethe as well as of his friend Merck. It is even more noticeable that, on the occasion of Louisa's first sojourn at Darmstadt (in December 1784), Schiller paid a visit to that Court—this was the occasion on which he first made Carl August's acquaintance—and read aloud there the first act of his *Don Carlos*, then on the eve of publication. The enthusiastic admiration cherished through life by Louisa for the great national poet, so preeminently gifted with that flow of feeling for which his age was athirst, must have then germinated. For the rest, Landgravine Marie, who had herself been simply and religiously brought up, seems to have applied the same methods to the training of her grandchildren. Though in her younger married days she had visited Paris with her husband, and had made some acquaintance with its fashionable and literary society, she had little sympathy with the French tastes which had penetrated to Darmstadt, and which afterwards made it a favourite refuge of the French Emigration. Her winter life and that of her charges in the old palace at Darmstadt must have been of the simplest sort; for Landgrave Lewis IX, whose noble consort had long before this passed away, persistently remained at Pirmasens, drilling his soldiers and excluding all non-military society. In the summer the ladies resided

in the neighbouring château of Braunshardt, where portraits of Queen Louisa in her younger days are stated to be still in existence, or at Broich, near Mühlheim on the Ruhr (below Düsseldorf). Pleasant traditions of the openness of the Princess Louisa's youthful hand to melting charity are said to linger in the latter neighbourhood, where the popular religious poet, Krummacher, several years later composed his *Parables*, dedicated by him to the Queen<sup>1</sup>.

The praises due to the system pursued in the early education of Louisa and her sisters may probably be summed up in the one word—modesty; nor is much else to be extracted either from the panegyrics of the irrepressible Bishop Eylert, or from the documentary evidence in the Hohenzollern Museum. After the eldest of the sisters had, on her marriage, been followed to Hildburghausen by their joint governess, Baroness von Wolzogen, a Mlle Agier had been appointed in her place, with results afterwards very lucidly exposed by Queen Louisa in commenting to her husband on the maxim in *Hermann und Dorothea*:

Children are not to be moulded as we may desire to mould them.

A happier choice must have been that of her successor, Mlle Salomé de Gélieux, a Neuchâtel clergyman's daughter, whose own experience had been acquired so far afield as England, and to whom in her retreat at Colombier we find King Frederick William

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Krummacher's *Parabeln* (Essen and Duisburg, 1805) went through many later editions. One of these poems (*Sleep and Death*) is known to English readers in the admirable translation of the late Rev. W. Gaskell.



III paying a visit of grateful acknowledgment, two or three years after his wife's death. Although, in the days of her youth, German national culture was already emancipating itself from a foreign ascendancy, education in royal and princely families, and in the upper classes of society at large, continued to seek its models preferentially *outré-Rhin*. In her later years, Queen Louisa often lamented that the instruction received by her in her youth had been more French than German; and Jean Paul had it on the testimony of her eldest sister that their mother had set the example by practically suppressing the use among them of the native tongue. Even at Berlin, the exaltation of German over French had proved merely one of the reforming whims of Frederick William II, and now, towards the close of his reign, he was as completely under French domination in his literary tastes as had ever been the case with his uncle. For the rest, there is documentary proof that, before the date of her marriage, Louisa's acquaintance with the French language had proceeded about as far as her real acquaintance with German, and no further; English she did not even begin to learn till a year or two later. As a matter of course, serious gaps were left in her historical and general knowledge, which she is afterwards found striving with pathetic energy to fill; and it is plain enough that, though at a later date she took an eager interest in the Pestalozzian ideas of education, her own mental training, and that of her sisters, had been conducted on a more antique system.

At the same time, the principles of Mlle de Gélieux and the practice of the excellent Landgravine continued to foster in their charges a generous and charitable

disposition, limited neither by the exiguity of their pocket-money nor by the fears of infection, which in that age were usually regarded as prohibitive of the visitation of the sick poor by well-nurtured women. Lastly, the religious training of her girlhood very manifestly stood under the influence of the popular theology of the day, a species of moral philosophy hovering halfway between orthodoxy and rationalism, and well represented by the once widely read Christoph Christian Sturm. In a copy of this writer's *Morning Communings with God*, presented to Louisa in 1788 by her grandmother, and preserved in the Hohenzollern Museum, the Princess has entered under the date of June 15 the manuscript note: "*C'est aujourd'hui le jour le plus etanciele*" (there seems to be something *himmlisch* in the compound) "*de ma Vie, le jour de ma confirmation.*" Even after this event, however, she seems to have continued to receive instruction or advice from J. W. Lichthammer, who had confirmed her, and whom more than a year later (in 1793) she is found requesting to order for her from Frankfort Moses Mendelssohn's then still famous "improvement" upon Plato's *Phædo*. The letter shows an enthusiasm for learning and a reverence for genius which the writer never lost, however imperfectly she was able to gratify the one or fully to develop the other. In 1800, Jean Paul reported, in the quarter where the information was calculated to give the liveliest satisfaction, how, according to Prince George of Strelitz, the Queen his sister never made the smallest journey without taking "a Herder" with her in the carriage, and how it had been generally remarked at Weimar that she blushed

when speaking to the illustrious author in person. Herder's Caroline was through her intimate friend Louisa von Ziegler (Merck's "Lila") well known to the Darmstadt Princesses.

Among these, Princess Louisa had made her entrance into the great world very quietly. Through the marriage of her sister Theresa, the Strelitz Family had become connected with the great House of Thurn and Taxis, whose chiefs were for centuries the Post-masters-General of the Empire; and thus it came to pass that Louisa, with her younger sister, the vivacious Frederica, and their brother George, witnessed, under the most favourable circumstances, two Imperial coronations at Frankfort-on-the-Main. In the splendours of that of Leopold II, in 1790, they bore the modest part that became their slender fortunes. Louisa is said to have afterwards related that she had to sew her silk shoes with her own hands. But a singular piece of good fortune had, on this occasion, made the young people recipients of the most genial hospitality that could have been found in the most hospitable of cities; for they were lodged in the house in the Great Hirschgraben inhabited by Frau Rath Goethe. Many years later, in her green old age, Goethe's mother imparted to the adoring Bettina those anecdotes concerning her young princely visitors which form part of the stock-in-trade of German pictorial history—how affably they made away with her refection of pancakes and salad *au lard*, and how they tried the mechanism of the pump in her back-yard, while she kept their governess locked up in her chamber. Queen Louisa never forgot this innocent frolic; and it was a golden necklace

presented by her to the old lady in 1803 which the latter wore at her memorable and all but speechless interview with Mme de Staël, so inimitably described by Bettina.

After, in 1791, accompanying their grandmother on an *incognito* visit to the Netherlands—a country afterwards consecrated to Louisa by the eloquent prose of Schiller—she and her younger sister in 1792 witnessed another Imperial coronation at Frankfort, the last that was ever to take place there. The Princess Louisa had now made her *début*, and we learn from Metternich's autobiography that he had the honour on this occasion of opening with her the ball given by the Imperial Ambassador, Prince Anton Esterhazy. Metternich was intimate with the Strelitz Princesses through their grandmother, who was a personal friend of his own mother; and he records that he remained on terms of sincere mutual affection with Queen Louisa to the last.

In March 1793, the two Princesses were summoned to Frankfort once more, but this time for a purpose personal to themselves. They had been spending the winter at their eldest sister Charlotte's miniature Court of Hildburghausen, to be illuminated at a rather later date by the sworn favourite of the entire sisterhood, Jean Paul. They were now bidden to return to Darmstadt by way of the Imperial city, where it was proposed to introduce them to their august kinsman, King Frederick William II of Prussia and his sons, the Crown-prince and Prince Lewis. The invasion of Champagne, in which the King and his eldest son had taken part in the previous year, had ended in a retreat



through the rain—all the more humiliating because of the manifesto with which Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick had opened the campaign; and the French Republican army had assumed the offensive and captured both Mainz and Frankfort. The latter city was, however, recovered in the last month of the year, and afforded comfortable winter-quarters to the King of Prussia. With the New Year came the awful tidings of the execution of Lewis XVI; Frankfort itself, though again free from war, was full of the rumours of it, and the siege of Mainz was actually begun by the Allies in April.

Louisa, like Maud in the poem, was “but seventeen,” and her sister Frederica was two years younger, when the heir to the Prussian monarchy and his brother, themselves closely united to one another by a tender affection, fell in love with the two Princesses on the spot, in due order of precedence, and to the complete satisfaction of their amiable, if not exemplary, father. A little more than a month later their betrothals were solemnised at Darmstadt; and Goethe’s account is on record of the visit paid by the young Princesses in May to their future father-in-law in the camp before Mainz. The two weddings followed on Christmas-Eve, at Berlin.

Princess Lewis of Prussia was left a widow three years after marriage; but she retained, with her charms, an elasticity of temperament which made consolation easy. The Crown-princess, whom when Queen the storms of life overwhelmed almost before she had passed her prime, might have declined to boast that she was “made of that self metal as her sister.” Yet the trials

of her reign proved the greatness of soul which was in her, and which owed something to a girlhood in harmony with the noblest passages of her life. But of these trials, which in some measure must have begun very soon after she had taken her place at the Court of an indulgent Sovereign, by the side of his well-intentioned heir, the present is no occasion for speaking.

## 29. FREDERICK OF WÜRTTEMBERG<sup>1</sup>

(*The English Historical Review*, January 1890)

THE publication, with the sanction of the present King of Württemberg, of the extremely interesting correspondence of his grandfather with the Emperor Napoleon is one of many signs showing to what extent modern German history has, in consequence of the great events of our own times, become "ancient history," even to the descendants of the Confederates of the Rhine. A kind of cultus has, with reservations of one kind or another, to be kept up at home for such *keineswegs fleckenlose, aber viel verkannte und höchst bedeutende Herrschergestalten* (the late Herr von Rümelin was a master of style, and occasionally beyond translation), as the first wearer of that royal crown which *in effigie* still flaunts it over the palace gates at Stuttgart. King Frederick of Württemberg is remembered in this country (with whose Government he appears to have, on one occasion, in vain offered the Emperor Napoleon to use his good offices) as the consort of a kindly British Princess. In his own, he was a despot, like more than one of his long series of ancestors, but gifted with an intelligence such as few of them combined with their hereditary self-willedness. He prided himself on having

<sup>1</sup> *Politische und militärische Correspondenz König Friedrichs von Württemberg mit Kaiser Napoleon I*, 1805-1813. Hrsgbn. von A. von Schlossberger. Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1889. *König Friedrich von Württemberg und seine Zeit*. Von Albert Pfister. *Ib.* 1888. *Mömpelgard's schöne Tage*. Von Otto Schanzenbach. *Ib.* 1887.

been educated in the school of Frederick the Great, whose monarchy he and several of his brothers served in arms; nor did the pupil discredit the master as an administrator. But it was to his alliance with Napoleon that his kingdom owed not only its rank as such, but also its proportions, more than double the size of the old duchy. The correspondence continued in Dr von Schlossberger's present publication shows how King Frederick, who was to all intents and purposes his own Foreign Minister, managed his relations with the master of Württemberg's destinies from about the time of the Peace of Pressburg to the eve of the battle of Leipzig.

In the early pages of this volume the newly made King is basking in the sunshine of a Treaty, *qui, en augmentant considérablement l'étendue de mes États, donne à ma maison le dernier degré d'illustration*. Its further course shows how, by the marriage of his daughter to King Jerome, he connected himself dynastically with the Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine; but this side of their relations has been more fully illustrated in a previous volume of correspondence from the Württemberg archives published by the same editor. The chief interest of the present volume turns upon the efforts of King Frederick to respond to the military claims he had to satisfy as a member of the Confederation; and he deserves genuine credit for his endeavours to make these claims square with his own position as a reigning German Prince. Of course, as a rule, his protests were in vain; thus, at the opening of the campaign of 1809, he had to submit to placing his contingent under the command of Vandamme; and



when, in the spring of 1811, he sought to be excused from helping to garrison Danzig, he was roundly told that "if the princes of the Confederation left the Emperor the slightest reason to doubt their goodwill in the common cause, their own ruin would be the consequence." Worst of all, at the beginning of the fatal Russian campaign, his son the Crown-prince had to bow to an Imperial remonstrance, couched in studiously offensive terms, concerning some trifling manifestations of insubordination among the officers of the Württemberg contingent, and shortly afterwards returned home on the plea of ill health. Yet the King's protests were not always in vain; and it is known (though the fact is not mentioned in this Correspondence) that he was successful in saving his troops from bearing a share in the Peninsular campaigns. The volume concludes with the recall of the Württemberg troops by their Sovereign within his own territory, and the expression of a pious hope on his part that "happier circumstances may bring back a condition of things in which I may be able to prove to your Imperial Majesty that my sentiments for your Majesty's person are unchangeable" (3 Oct. 1813). Enough, therefore, lies between cover and cover, not only for confirming the view that King Frederick knew when to speak and when to be silent, when to protest and when to acquiesce, when to hold his hand and when to act; but also for throwing further, though hardly unexpected, light upon the character and methods of his correspondent. With the exception of a few autograph postscripts, the letters of Napoleon—88 in number—are not in his own hand: of the King's 159 letters, drafts in his own writing,

and corrected by himself, are in most cases extant. Of the remaining letters, a correspondence with the Russian Court, on which I will immediately touch, is the most interesting.

King Frederick, who had been partly educated at Lausanne, writes excellent French, and his style is a model of diplomatic suavity, without being in the least wanting in clearness or in point; of course, the foil is supplied by the brusquerie and occasional brutality of the Emperor. Only very occasionally, the latter allows himself to be drawn in the direction of the sentimental, as when, writing from Berlin in 1806, he allows that he has *été visiter effectivement le tombeau du grand Frédéric*, and, again, when, on the eve of his second marriage, he owns the soft satisfaction that *on dit effectivement beaucoup de bien de l'archiduchesse Marie Louise*. He is more himself in the bulletin style in which he announces his victories and their accompaniments of carnage and desolation, or glosses over his reverses, as well as in his incidental revelations of himself as the slave of circumstance, and as the instrument of great popular forces *effectivement* equally little under his control.

Although, in this Correspondence, King Frederick fairly holds his own where the interests of his dynasty and people are concerned, yet there is, notwithstanding, much that is humiliating in the relations between him and his *bon frère*, even if we grant Dr von Schlossberger's contention as to the absurdity of judging the King's policy "from the point of view of the nationality principle of more recent times." Personally, he can hardly have relished the Emperor's suggestion that he

should, as the brother of the Empress-dowager of Russia, use his influence at that Court against Austria, on the plea of the advantages to be obtained for the House of Württemberg. "A clever person," the King is told with mediocre politeness, might turn to good account the Emperor of Russia's discontent with Austria; and "I fancy that a mother imploring her son to be mindful of the splendour of her house would create a good effect." As a German Prince, too, King Frederick had to listen to more hometruths than can have been agreeable. He may have found no difficulty in applauding to the echo Napoleon's savage sarcasm against the *misérable singerie* at Ratisbon. And, doubtless, he had his own reasons for not straining at the Emperor's instructions to make short work of the German Order, though he afterwards found Mergentheim a tougher morsel than he had expected. His jealousies and territorial quarrels with Bavaria and Baden, of which the former in particular recur in every part of this volume, were of the nature of his position; and the Protector of the Confederation himself enunciated the principle that its members were to look for an increase, not a diminution, of their possessions. Thus the alertness which the King of Württemberg manifested after every great victory, and on the occasion of every pacification, and which in December 1809 took him to Paris itself, was (though the Princes of Hohenlohe and others may have thought otherwise) altogether to his credit; for without aggrandisement there was little chance of self-preservation. His conduct towards Prussia, with whose ruling family his own had been so closely connected, and towards the Emperor Francis,

against whose Government he confessed to his sister that he had no cause for complaint, was perhaps equally inevitable. It does not appear whether he responded to the Emperor's request that he should proclaim a public thanksgiving for the entry of the French into Berlin; but his greed for the Austrian enclaves was expressed with ignoble openness, and even a King by the grace of Napoleon must have felt the bitter disgrace of having to obey an order like the following, issued, it will be observed, before cause shown (4 March 1809):

Monsieur mon frère, les nouvelles que je reçois de Vienne me font juger convenable de réunir sans délai les troupes de la Confédération. Il est donc nécessaire que Votre Majesté donne des ordres pour que ses troupes, infanterie, cavalerie, et artillerie, soient réunies du 15 au 20 mars et cantonnées entre Aalen, Neresheim et Heidenheim. Dans peu de jours, le ministre de V. M. recevra une note de mon ministre des relations extérieures, qui lui fera connaître l'état des choses et la convaincra de l'injustice et de la folie de l'Autriche.

Sur ce &c.

NAPOLÉON.

At home, he showed no hesitation about doing the Emperor's bidding as to the regulation of the local press; and so little was he anxious even to affect independence, that we find him applying in the same quarter for permission before opening negotiations with Rome for the establishment in his kingdom of two Catholic bishoprics. All this had to be borne because of the "system" with which the first King of Württemberg had identified himself, and which entitled his patron, even in the dark days of January 1813, to appeal



to the royal interests against those whose object was to create *ce qu'ils appellent une Allemagne*. But Frederick's time for plain speaking had at last come, and his reply, with its distasteful allusion to the eight hundred years during which *his* country had been loyal to *his* House, struck home. Dr von Schlossberger (in one of the few notes vouchsafed by him) cites the Duke of Bassano (Maret) to the effect that the Emperor was excessively hurt by this insinuation that he was not likewise *ancien gentilhomme*. He characteristically opened his mind on the subject to Count Wintzingerode, the Württemberg Ambassador at Paris, and it was on this occasion that he paid to King Frederick those left-handed compliments which the editor of this Correspondence has blazoned forth in his Preface, and to which, however his sympathies may be affected by them, no reader of King Frederick's Letters will be inclined to say nay.

Major Pfister's remarkably clear and well-written biography of the first King of Württemberg opportunely supplements Dr von Schlossberger's recent editions of Frederick I's Correspondence with his daughter Catharine and her Buonaparte husband, and with Napoleon himself. As I hinted above, it is not easy for patriotic German historians at the present day dispassionately to appreciate the merits of a Prince who owed his royal Crown to the grace of Napoleon, and the doubling of his territorial power to the dismemberment of the Germanic Empire. Happily, Major Pfister, as to whose own political soundness there can be no doubt (he is the author of a capital little Life of the Emperor William I), is not afraid of testifying to

certain minor beliefs that are in him. He holds that the consolidation of old and new Württemberg into a compact and well-organised monarchy, with an appropriate common Constitution and an efficient army of its own, was a very important step forward, and part of a process in a sense indispensable to the political regeneration of this part of Germany. New Württemberg was a medley of odds and ends, alien to the population of the original duchy in political traditions and, to a large extent, in religious belief; in old Württemberg, on the other hand, the rust had eaten into a venerated constitutional machinery to which the population clung with pathetic fidelity, but which had ceased to serve many practical purposes except that of making government impossible. The factors of the State were chronically at variance with one another; the Standing Committee of the Diet guarded the *Land-schaftskasse* as the very palladium of political authority, and occasionally, unless I mistake, maintained salaried agents at foreign Courts to watch the conduct of the ducal Ministers-resident; while, even under Catholic Princes the Lutheran clergy continued the traditions of a sterile intolerance, which at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had shut the door upon the Calvinist Huguenot refugees. Meanwhile, the nobles were estranged from a political system in which they had no share of influence; and the burghers gloried in the general right of bearing arms, under which the country had been left defenceless against a succession of invasions. Out of these elements Frederick I may be said to have *created* the kingdom of Württemberg, which he provided with an efficient military force

and governed, if somewhat rigorously and restlessly, at least with single-minded devotion to the public interest and with lofty disregard of the inherited claims of any class or sect. Indeed, by the nobility he was perhaps less liked than by any class of his subjects; and though he was a Protestant, it was under him that the Catholics first enjoyed religious equality in Württemberg. His vigilance brought his territories safe out of the terrible vicissitudes of the Napoleonic era, whose vortex at one time threatened to sweep the very name of Württemberg off the face of the earth, transferring the dynasty to the Lower Rhine, or even to the Tagus; and his insight enabled him to seize the right moment for preparing his defection. From the Vienna Conference his kingdom came forth undiminished; whereupon, he at once set about the completion of his life's task, by laying down the basis of a common Constitution (the first promised by any German Sovereign to his people) for the whole of his States. Though he did not live to prevail over the stubborn champions of *das gute alte Recht*, he brought round to his side the moderate men in whom every good cause has its surest allies; and this part of his life's work was accomplished with comparative ease by his successor.

For the territorial aggrandisement which enabled him to hold his own against his ancient lieges, he paid, as has been seen, the price of a period of dependence, which, to the eye of the patriotic historian, justly seems infinitely more humiliating than at the time it seemed to either prince or people. Justly—for in their unconsciousness of the shame lies now its deepest sting. But, in the first place, the humiliation in question was not

monopolised by the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine; and again, in the case of King Frederick I of Württemberg at least, it was rendered less palpable by his firmness of character and inborn self-reliance. "He was always," says Major Pfister, "in the habit of dealing with Napoleon as Power with Power. In none of his public declarations did he allow any recognition on his part of a relation of subordination even remotely to appear. He remonstrated where he thought it requisite; he pointed out what he deemed encroachments upon his rights to Napoleon, and even refused some of the demands of the latter... he never gave up any of his subjects to the French judicial tribunals, never paid any tributes to the Protector, never accorded any political favours to the French before other nations; and refused to accede to the Emperor's wish that the *Code Napoléon* should be introduced into his dominions." This position is supported by Major Pfister with sufficient illustrations. Even when, in 1809, the King submitted (as already noticed) to Napoleon's demand that the Württemberg contingent should be placed under the command of Vandamme, he issued instructions to his officers to the effect that, while they were to recognise the supreme military command of the French general, they were in no wise to connive at any interference by him in the general management and internal organisation of the Württemberg troops. "Any officer who by cringing to General Vandamme shall hinder General von Neubronn in the performance of his duties, will be made an example of by the king and punished like a felon (*wie ein Felon*)."

Even Colonel Maurice would probably not care to



quarrel with Major Pfister's view as to the political education which lies in universal military service; since, for obvious reasons, he exempts England from the application of the principle. The question is not one for discussion here; but it may be pointed out that nowhere at the turn of the century was the cosmopolitanism which abhors such obligations more in vogue than in Schiller's Swabian home. Frederick I at the same time introduced conscription cautiously but surely, and succeeded in calling into life an army whose gallant services, concisely recorded in this volume, form a very memorable chapter in military history. Its laurels are not, we think, impaired either by the untoward incident at Kitzen, or by the inevitable transaction at Leipzig. Of the awful price which his people, in its turn, paid for its experience no more need be said. The Russian campaign of 1812 destroyed one per cent. of the entire Württemberg population; and, in the following year, the country had, for the third time, to place in the field what was virtually a new army. It was the public reference by King Frederick to these losses and their cause which for the first time in the long history of the relations between them brought upon him the anger of Napoleon.

The author of this book, the value of which is enhanced by a series of biographical notices of eminent Württembergers mentioned in the course of the narrative, has not cared to say much of the private life and character of King Frederick. Treitschke, who has no such legal dangers to fear as that into which poor Wraxall put his foot, has labelled the consort of our kindly English Princess Charlotte Augusta with an

epithet or two that need no gilding. The good lady herself appears but once in this political biography, but then on no less an occasion than the visit of Napoleon in the first days of October, 1805, when, on the very eve of the most brilliant of all his campaigns, he definitively secured the alliance of the (then) Elector Frederick:

Napoleon seemed to feel very much at his ease at Ludwigsburg; he is in those days described as remarkably agreeable and engaging. Before his conference with the Elector, he requested to be taken to the Electress. This was done, and the Emperor's behaviour to her was so extremely amiable, and he had so much to say to her in praise of the English, *and especially of their literature*, that when some hours afterwards she withdrew from the interview, she was full of his praises.

Less *à propos* than the discussion on the beauties of English literature might have been a reference to the fact that the electorate was then full of French troopers fresh from Boulogne, and grievously in lack of horses. The intention of supplying them with mounts in Charlotte Augusta's native country had quite recently been abandoned; and in consequence it was Württemberg which soon found itself horseless.

An interesting account of the parents of King Frederick, and of the training given by them to the numerous family of children, one of whom became Empress of Russia, is supplied in a lecture delivered by Professor Schanzenbach, on the occasion of the anniversary of the birthday of the reigning King of Württemberg, in 1887. During the years 1769-1792, Duke Frederick Eugene of Württemberg, who had previously

served under Frederick the Great, resided at Mömpelgard (Montbéliard) as Governor of this outlying county among the dominions of his House. At the country seat of Étupes, he and his amiable wife led a tranquil life, which Professor Schanzenbach compares to that of his brother Charles and the fair Franziska (absurdly called by somebody "the Maintenon of Württemberg") at Hohenheim, and which at all events furnishes a pleasing example of simplicity, enlightenment, and refinement. In 1792, three years before Frederick Eugene himself became reigning Duke at Stuttgart, he was driven from Mömpelgard by a *coup de main* of the Convention, whose representative, Bernard de Saintes, informed the municipal authorities: "*Je vous apporte la liberté... j'ai des canons tout près d'ici.*" Thus, practically, came to an end a very interesting little political anomaly, which had its origin in 1394, when Henrietta, the granddaughter of Henry of Montfaucon, brought these lands, watered by the Doubs, as her dowry to Count Eberhard the younger of Württemberg. The *coup de main* of 1792 was legalised by the Peace of Paris in 1814; but many Mömpelgarders preserved a pious remembrance of the old connexion and sent their sons to school at Stuttgart. Of the whole history of this connexion, which is not without significance for the progress of the Reformation, and which was gracefully acknowledged by the most illustrious of Mömpelgarders, the great savant Cuvier, a clear account will be found in Professor Schanzenbach's lecture, which may possibly attract other readers of this *Review* besides myself.

### 30. AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS OF EUROPEAN POLITICS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

(*Lectures on the History of the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, 1904*)

WE are apt to talk glibly of the ideas, beliefs and aspirations of a "century"—just as if that term, or what that term conveys to us, not only had hands and feet, but were defined by limits corresponding more or less closely to the literal significance of the word, and as if it thus conveniently covered one of those broader groups or divisions in which, for the ordinary purposes of study, historical phenomena have to be arranged.

As a matter of fact, however, not many of those chronological divisions which we call centuries are apt to present themselves to the mind of the general student in the light of separate entities (if I may so say), each with characteristics proper to itself. Most of them are too far off to detach themselves to our eyes from the nebulous clusters into which they seem absorbed; others are too near at hand to admit of our surveying their conditions of life and the motive forces which determined them, as detached from the surroundings in which we ourselves have our being. Yet it is not always comparative nearness or remoteness which makes one of these conventional divisions of time fitter or less fit for such special treatment. Some centuries

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures...Delivered at the Cambridge University Extension Summer Meeting, August, 1902.* Ed. F. A. Kirkpatrick. *Inaugural Lecture: Some Aims and Aspirations, etc.* Cambridge, at the University Press, 1902.



seem the mere brooding-times of history, and while watching them we can only speculate as to

the main chance of things  
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds  
And weak beginnings lie intresured.

Others again appear to us as if they were broken up, like the ground near the seats of the oracles of the Gods, by the very magnitude and force of some of the historical movements which have occurred in them, and which have, so to speak, changed the face of the century itself. You will, I think, as a rule, find that there is some inner reason for a literary usage that effectually establishes itself; and I cannot recall any century which more adequately lends itself to treatment as a whole than the 18th of our era, which is constantly on our lips as a term carrying with it a definite and distinct political, intellectual and moral significance. With regard, at all events, to the political history of Europe and that of other parts of the world whose affairs were brought into direct contact with those of our own continent—notably the New World and the East Indies—in few other centuries do the main issues seem so clear, or does the logic of their connexion with one another appear so palpable; and again in few others, as they pass onwards to their close, is the coming of a new age so unmistakably announced by the downfall of old ideas of government and traditions of social life.

Whether, when a few generations hence—and generations pass rapidly in this little academical world of ours, to which we bid all our visitors the heartiest of welcomes—whether, when the time has come to sum up the characteristic movements, and the ideas informing

them, of the 19th century, they will be found possessed of a coherence of bearing and a definiteness of aim such as I have ascribed to those of its predecessor, I will not now enquire. Of this, however, I am quite sure; that we still stand too near to the 19th century to judge of it as a whole; that the present stage of dealing with its history should still be primarily one of investigation, and to a large extent not more than tentatively one of criticism. For this reason I look with satisfaction on the programme, full of variety as well as of other elements of interest, which has been prepared for the Historical Section of this Summer Meeting, and which I understand to aim at an examination of classified material, rather than to aspire prematurely to attempting a synthesis of results. And this I say without any fear of being misunderstood. The study of quite modern history is in my humble opinion—and if I am guilty of heresy, I am in no great fear of having to go to the stake alone—quite as profitable as is that of any other kind of history, so long as it is carried on with a consciousness of its special drawbacks as well as of its special advantages. Among the latter, the chief, of course, is the quicker insight of the student into the various bearings of the problems presented to him—a readiness inseparable from the greater intensity of the interest excited. On the other hand, the student of recent history is at a relative disadvantage, not so much because much of the evidence he requires is still kept from him—for alas! time and the worm are obscurantists as well as princes and officials—but, also, because the danger of misunderstanding the evidence actually at hand and the temptation towards perverting it are

greatest for those inclined to look upon themselves as witnesses. The historian, we know, has prophetic functions; but his prophesying must come to naught if he is in any way personally associated with the inspirations which he reveals.

This experience was not spared to a very high-minded as well as clear-thinking and well-equipped writer, who, about the middle of the last century, undertook to narrate its history, from the Treaties of Vienna onwards. The name of GERVINUS deserves to be held in honour in England; but my reason for saying this is not the fact that, like so many Continental Liberals of the second quarter of the 19th century, he cherished an admiration for our institutions to which not all of them remained, like himself, faithful in their later years. At all events, his regard for this country and his interest in her public life were not chargeable with the facile enthusiasm of those who, as Tsar Nicholas I said—some time before his thoughts of England had changed into gall—because they had paid a single visit to London, heard something about *Magna Carta*, and shaved with an English razor, could thenceforth never turn their thoughts away from our incomparable Constitution. Gervinus was, as I need not remind many of my hearers, deeply imbued with the spirit of Germanic literature which in his eyes found its supreme embodiment in Shakespeare, and not less profoundly with that of Germanic Art, of which, as he held, a true type was with the same certainty recognisable in Handel, whom we may without presumption claim as an Englishman by adoption. These things we are not likely to overlook—least of all in this University,

where we take pride in following the great teacher of history whom we have recently lost in believing that historical progress is not most conclusively traceable in the domain of politics<sup>1</sup>. To the principle, ignored by some of Gervinus' successors, that political history cannot, and ought not to, be isolated from the history of general national and human progress, he steadily adhered in his great work, which may thus claim to be a contribution to the philosophy of history as well as a successful digest of a large section of its political material, besides furnishing an abundance of characterisation, and thus illustrating that imaginative side of historical composition which vindicates one among the uses of the study of Shakespeare and his precursors. But of Gervinus' great work itself I must not essay to speak within the narrow framework of this address, nor can I more than allude to the causes of its having been broken off at what might seem the height of its progress. The eighth and last volume of the *History of the Nineteenth Century* deals with the July Revolution of 1830 and its immediate consequences, including the severance of Belgium from Holland—the removal, in Louis-Philippe's phrase, of that stumbling-block of Europe which her representatives at Vienna had in their fear of France thought to set up once for ever. Yet it was not the Revolution of 1830 or its sequel of 1848-9 which troubled Gervinus; but his knowledge that, at home in Germany—about the beginning of that era of which most of us have been contemporaries—events were taking a turn contradictory to the ideals of self-de-

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Acton's *Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History* in his *Lectures on Modern History* (1906).



velopment and self-reorganisation to which, as a historian and as a politician, he had so consistently adhered. But, though no writer of history is called upon to exclude himself from taking part in the making of it, he ought, at his peril, to keep the two functions distinct from one another.

And, in truth, I was on the present occasion thinking less of Gervinus' *History* itself than of the *Introduction* to it—an essay once so well known that I have felt a kind of familiar tremor in turning over its well-marked pages—which meant so much more to us than they ever can mean to you of a later generation. Yet, for all that, this brief but pregnant dissertation might, perhaps, taking it as a whole, prove not less interesting and useful to an enquirer into the historical sequences of the century, than it could have been to Gervinus' first readers, who were placed like himself in the midst of its eddying currents and conflicting interests. The great truth which this essay teaches, and which to my mind it succeeds in enforcing without any pedantic insistence upon the momentousness of any particular step in the argument, is that, from the point of view of political growth or development, the 19th century is, like all the periods which have succeeded one another since the Middle Ages drew towards their close, itself but a stage—an act, if you will, in the drama—of one great and still unfinished struggle. This struggle may be summarised as concerned with the transference of power from the few to the many, with the contention, in other words, between the democratic and the oligarchic principle—absolute government or monarchy proper—intervening again and again in the conflict, siding now

with the one and now with the other combatant, at one time seeming to accelerate the movement towards a final solution or settlement, at another, with the aid of many instincts and interests, contriving to block the path, but without ever ultimately proving itself more than a passing phase in the history of the unending strife. Though this great struggle between principles of government, by which almost every kind of social principle is likewise largely affected, might have seemed to be approaching its termination towards the end of the 18th century, it renewed itself with fresh impetus in the 19th, after the transitory phase of the Napoleonic age—transitory even to contemporary eyes that remained undazzled by the sun of Austerlitz. What are the prospects of ultimate solution, what will be the issue which so many voices are proclaiming to us as plainly written on the wall, it may or may not be for the historian of the 20th century to determine. In the meantime, the most instructive portion of Gervinus' essay is, beyond all question, that longer portion of which I fear many an impatient hand will at the present day (in no sense a day of introductions) incline rapidly to turn the pages—where, in a masterly survey of the general progress of modern history since the close of the Middle Ages, the author shows how each succeeding century has a share in the movement, without deflecting its main current, or preventing it from a nearer approach to the unseen goal.

But Gervinus was well aware, and, indeed, he explicitly reminds his readers, that, though such a movement is discernible by those capable of surveying the entire course of modern political history—much as

an analogous current was observed by Aristotle in the political life of the ancient Mediterranean world—yet it is not thus that it would be either possible or expedient for the historical enquirer to look upon the briefer periods, with which he has in the first instance to deal, and of which it behoves him to make clear to himself the significance. In such periods as these it is necessary for him, in the first instance, to distinguish clearly what may be described as the successive fluctuations of ebb and tide; and there are still narrower limits, yet limits beyond which the consciousness of those whose lives fall within them often fails to range, in which a single potent force, one group of ideas and conceptions, perhaps the influence of one great individuality, seems irresistibly to direct and control the life and progress of a nation or a group of nations. More than ever are we impressed by the fact of such periodical predominances in an age like our own, in which political ideas, intellectual tendencies and artistic conceptions assert their mastery over the whole civilised world with the mysterious speed of a panic terror or a new fashion in millinery. The historian of modern times is privileged to command a wealth of material of every kind; and his first task is to find the true signature of whatever period, however short it be, which is immediately under his ken. The true history of the English Commonwealth and of the Great War which brought it forth, could, as their late venerated historian, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, well knew, never be written truthfully until it had been written carefully, and until it had been followed through each of its successive stages, year by year. How much more must this be

the case with the history of the quickly-moved and quickly-moving times near our own, to whose immediate impulses the oldest and most self-contained of us must perforce in a large measure respond.

The task which the student of 19th century history has before him is therefore a laborious one; but it is not labours such as these which weary the mind alive to interests of which none is alien to it. May I, within the half hour during which I may still venture to trespass on your patience, attempt to recall a passage or two in the history of 19th century Europe, exhibiting the contemporary political world, or prominent sections of it, as intent upon a settlement, more or less final and complete, of its problems, and hopeful of a consummation which alas! it needs no prophet looking backwards to announce to us as unachieved? My observations will almost entirely refer to the earlier half of the century, and for the most part to a single stage of that period, partly because of the exigencies of time, and partly because I know that it is the later half which is to be chiefly discussed in a full and well-arranged series of special lectures that are to follow.

If, then, as we are surely justified in doing, we regard the Napoleonic Age as the necessary complement of the Revolutionary, and accept the position in which Napoleon himself was willing to acquiesce, that with his first overthrow the period of the fundamental unsettlement of Europe was at an end, we can have no difficulty in understanding the hopes and expectations with which her populations watched the assembling of the Congress of Vienna in 1814. The process of disenchantment



was, no doubt, to be rapid; and, under the dictatorial influence of an epigram or two, posterity has been inclined to minimise, not only the actual results of the Congress, but also the labours by which those results were produced—as if at any time the real work of a large assembly were done by more than a small and select body; and the necessary few were not wanting at Vienna. I doubt whether more than one or two of the names of the statesmen who were the real working-bees of the Congress would carry any particular significance to modern ears; but such is often the fate of those who are content to take a continuous part in the constructive work of statesmanship and to forego the applause which as a rule must inevitably attach itself to the arena. At the outset of the Congress, the hopes set on the issue of its deliberations were unprecedented, alike in their height and in their variety. While the pacifications concluded within the last twenty years had, as it were, but dotted the surface of the sea of war, none of those earlier compacts which had long been accounted landmarks in the political history of Europe—not even the Treaties of Westphalia or the Peace of Utrecht—had attempted more than to regulate the relations between a definite number of important States; at Vienna, every country in Europe, with the sole exception of Turkey, knew that its interests would be drawn under discussion. It is true that the bases of the territorial resettlement had already been laid down at Paris, though Talleyrand, whose influence thus made itself felt even before the assembling of the Congress, had managed to have them kept secret in order to spare the susceptibilities of defeated France;

and, on the other hand, it was not known how far from complete was the agreement which had been reached, and how questions were still left open, destined in the very midst of negotiations for peace to bring the chief Powers to the verge of a new War. Thus it came to pass that not only romantic journalists—and in the early decades of the 19th century there were romantic journalists who occupied posts of honour in their profession and in contemporary literature—but practical politicians reckoned on the establishment by the Congress of a system of States, capable of maintaining a positive balance of power, and not merely of satisfying that quasi-negative interpretation of the term which means a combination against the preponderance of any single Power—be its name Habsburg, or France, or Russia. Such hopes as these were undeceived by the operations of the Congress itself, or rather by those of the Committee of Powers acting on its behalf, who speedily enough made it evident that their scheme of territorial reconstruction began and ended in patch-work, and that, even as to the negative principle of not leaving France too strong, they were prepared for compromise. It is too much to say, as has been repeatedly said, that the principle of territorial readjustment followed in the Vienna Treaties was statistical or more properly speaking numerical only—i.e. that the apportionment of dominions and the assignment of frontiers were made out by a comparison of the number of subjects or “souls” allotted to each Government. Still, it was numerical almost or quite as much as it was historical or linguistic or religious or, to use the word of magic sound into whose significance

that of all the rest is wont to enter—national. Thus, the Congress accorded its sanction to a long series of arrangements which seem to us to fly in the face of that principle of nationality destined so soon to become one of the active forces of European politics, but which were in reality by their very arbitrariness and rigour to aid in hastening the assertion of that principle. If we turn to the south, we find Austria securing to herself an uncontested compensation in that Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom which a Government far worse than hers might under other conditions have far more easily reconciled to its rule. If we pass to the north, we see Norway, cut off from Denmark, who spoke her tongue, and coupled against her will with Sweden, while Denmark is thus driven to seek to make up for her loss by forcing her German provinces into political union with herself; or we see Finland apathetically left in the grasp of Russia, which in our own day is, in defiance of historical tradition, and in violation of sworn rights, at last closing upon the victim of impulses defiant alike of protests and of scruples. Or again, if we glance at the northern border-provinces between France and Germany—the Belgian and the Dutch—which after separating from one another in the hour of common stress had come to agree to differ in their material interests, in their religious traditions and in other respects, we find them, to no real purpose so far as the peace of Europe was concerned, forced into an arbitrary union. Everywhere, the settlement was a settlement *de par le Congrès*—and often one palpably opposed to history and against kind.

But the Congress had been expected to accomplish

other things besides the establishment of that comprehensive political system of States which, as Gentz had the sublime assurance to declare, only missed being perfected by it because Napoleon chose to break loose from Elba. I need not dwell, in particular, on the expectation of a systematic encouragement by the Congress of Constitutional forms of government, due not so much to the wishes of the leading statesmen of the Congress itself, as to the situation of which European public opinion regarded them as the managers. Metternich, to do him justice, consistently kept Austria out of the competition, and Castlereagh, in the House of Lords, using one of those simpler figures of irony which suited him, expressed himself as by no means convinced that, had he gone about like a missionary to preach the excellency and the fitness of our Constitution, all countries would have been found ripe for profiting by his endeavours. The action in this direction of Great Britain—whose own parliamentary Constitution was, we remember, still unreformed—had as yet been little more than incidental, and had by no means assumed that character of sympathetic provocativeness with which our policy was credited in later days, when Palmerston sought to better the instructions of Canning. On the other hand, the granting or promising of Constitutions had already become an expedient of the collapsing tyranny of Great Britain's archfoe, Napoleon; nor can there be any doubt but that to his Warsaw Constitution was due the suggestion of the grand scheme of a Constitutional Poland, so warmly cherished for a time by the fluctuating idealism of the Tsar Alexander. As for the Congress itself, though it



showed small solicitude for preserving chartered rights, more especially where the inherited or traditional privileges of oligarchical bodies, whether in Switzerland or elsewhere, were concerned, it exhibited no unwillingness to favour the establishment of new Constitutions, more especially on the motion of the Governments themselves. In its very first article, the Final Act of the Congress guaranteed their national institutions and right of representation to those Poles who had respectively become the subjects of the three so-called Partitioning Powers, and it proceeded to make special provision for the security of a Constitution of such vanishing importance as that of Cracow. It guaranteed the new German Federal Constitution, which in its turn explicitly promised the grant of Constitutions to all the States composing the Federation (though, of course, the Austrian Government never fulfilled its part of the compact); while elsewhere, in Norway, in Spain, and in France itself, the grant or expectation of Constitutional forms of government was declared or understood to have the sanction of the Concert of the European Powers.

The imperfect success of these Constitutional hopes and expectations in some instances, in others the resistance offered to them openly or secretly by the Governments directly concerned with their fulfilment, together with the conflicts, the conspiracies, the insurrections which in consequence filled the earlier half of the century, till they culminated in the general Revolutionary outbreak of 1848-9, cannot be dwelt upon here. I do not see why the Congress should be made chargeable with all these failures; for its actual

commission—the commission with which it had been charged at Paris, and which was the only definite mandate that it had at any time received—did not include the regeneration of the public life of the States of Europe on Constitutional lines. But public opinion had expected this achievement from so unusual a gathering of representative statesmen, and it had expected a great deal besides.

Hopes—more or less vague—had been cherished that at Vienna, after a real equilibrium had been established among the States of Europe, and after their internal tranquility had been assured by the grant or the prospect of representative institutions, the foundations would be laid of a legally established international community—perhaps by the establishment of a great Court of Arbitration, and perhaps by the adoption of common binding principles of future Disarmament, however remote and however gradual might be its actual consummation. We need not wonder that such aspirations should have attended the termination of an age of war and the assembling of the statesmen of Europe, whose primary task it was to elaborate the terms of the pacification that had at last put an end to it; indeed, it would have been strange had an invariable sequence not repeated itself on so exceptional an occasion. The Peace of Utrecht had been followed by the announcement of Bernardin de Ste Pierre's utopian peace-project:

*Une fable aussi belle—  
La paix universelle.*

Jeremy Bentham's project of an international Court for

the decision of international differences was probably suggested by Catharine II's, in another way, almost equally abortive Armed Neutrality of 1780; and Kant's more famous plan of a Universal Peace, not the less interesting to us because it was confuted by Hegel from the point of view of the modern conception of the State, unmistakably had an origin less noble than itself in the ill-fated attempt to safeguard the neutrality of Northern Germany in the shameless Peace of Bâle.

The problem of a proportionate disarmament of the chief European Powers, it must not be forgotten, could hardly be solved by them, even in principle, when Four of them held themselves obliged for an indefinite period of time to occupy the territory of a Fifth. But, though the reductions of the military strength of the several European Powers, both in 1814 and in 1815, were—except in the case of Great Britain, who may be said to have reduced her army fighting power by little short of one half—far less considerable than had been hoped, neither the Powers nor the peoples of Europe in the period which followed upon the close of the Napoleonic Age acquiesced in the policy of an armed peace. In other words they were not prepared to maintain themselves in a constant state of preparation for war. It is not to be denied that any system of separate Alliances between particular Powers—be they dual or triple or other—is far more likely to lead to the maintenance of such a policy than was the system of an Alliance of all the Great Powers, which the statesmanship of the Congressional period sought to put into operation.

You are aware how, both in the matter of disarma-

ment, and, more especially, in that of the establishment of some common tribunal for the settlement of international differences, the disappointment of the hopes founded upon direct action on the part of the Congress of Vienna by no means damped the ardour of those who, whether in the Old World or in the New, had at heart a cause of so perennial an interest for Europe and for humanity. The task of protesting against War, and against the avowal by statesmanship and by society of their impotence to find any way of systematically averting it, was now—and this again was characteristic of the new century—taken up by combinations and Societies. Often, no doubt, aided by the potent influence of personality—for the spirit of William Penn had survived into the ninth and tenth generations—these associations as a rule sought strength in numbers, and gradually overcame that impression of futile dogmatism which had been created by isolated efforts. No more interesting statement was ever put on record than that drawn up by the late Johann von Bloch in the last volume of his monumental work on *The War of the Future*—the text-book as I may call it of the Hague Congress—with the purpose of showing how the endeavours of which I speak gradually took possession of public opinion, and through public opinion impressed their significance upon the Governments. In course of time, Napoleon III took notice of these efforts—though unhappily his ears, like those of the rider in the legend, were open to inspirations and insinuations both on the left hand and on the right. At Paris, in 1856, the late Lord Clarendon honoured himself and his country by proposing a Declaration which was adopted by the



Powers, that it was their desire in the event of serious international differences to seek to avert war by arbitration before actually resorting to arms. In this last clause, of course, lay the novelty of the Paris Declaration, for there was nothing new in the resort to Arbitration in the case of boundary questions and of other difficulties not of a nature to threaten a warlike issue. Whether or not such an issue was actually within measurable distance, when in 1871 the British Government over which Mr Gladstone presided resolved on signing the Treaty of Washington, which referred to Arbitration the so-called *Alabama* and cognate claims—moral courage of an unusual kind was, most certainly, required to make possible both that signature and the acceptance of the American view, which treated these claims as national and not merely as private. Resort has since been had with increasing frequency to Arbitration for the solution of international difficulties; and, though the application of it has at times been balked, its progressive use seems assured.

The Congress of Vienna, it may be worth remembering, took an important step in the direction of securing the blessings of peace to certain European territories peculiarly exposed to the dangers of war, and for the same reasons specially liable themselves to give rise to conflicts between other nations. The neutrality of Switzerland, which had been violated in both the Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars and was again violated immediately after the first overthrow of Napoleon, was now placed under the most formal guarantees; and you know how this precedent was followed in the instance of Belgium in 1831, in that

of Serbia in 1856, and in that of Luxemburg in 1867. You are probably, also, aware how it was not long afterwards—in the course of the great Franco-German War—that the question arose in connexion with the last-named guarantee: whether the principle was generally accepted that any one of the guaranteeing Powers was entitled to judge for itself as to any supposed offence against the terms of the neutrality conceded, and consequently to decide for itself as to withdrawal from the guarantee, or whether such questions were for the decision of the whole body of signatories. The latter principle, if it had been definitively accepted, would have added another security, so far as it went, for the Peace of Europe. The general system, I may add, of interposing weak States between strong—buffer-States as they are sometimes, though not I think very felicitously, called—was itself a not particularly happy adaptation of a Napoleonic device, employed by him for a very different purpose; nor was it to prove successful in the case of Sardinia, or in that of Saxony, or, so far as I can remember, in any other case.

It would take me too far to advert to those aspirations towards an international treatment of international interests which addressed themselves not so much to the averting of War, as to its incidence and management. The days of the Congress of Vienna and the period ensuing were unfavourable to a discussion of the rights of neutrals by sea; and Great Britain, who at the time of the opening of the Congress was actually still at war with the United States on behalf of her navigation laws, was not likely for some time to consent to enter-

tain proposals in favour of their modifications. Other questions were, in the interests of humanity at large, to be taken up by a much later generation, and to these I advert only in order that they may not seem to have been left unremembered. The Geneva Convention of 1863 was but the first of a beneficent series of agreements; for when the War of 1866 had demonstrated its incompleteness, it was supplemented by another Convention in 1868, which met in time for its resolutions to be in force in the great War of 1870. The reaction produced by that War against the propaganda of peace and the various schemes for giving more definite shape to it, which had again and again appeared on the horizon since the days of the Congress of Vienna itself, is not to be denied; but the experience is one which, in one way or another, we have gone through before and since. In this case, there was much coolness shown, especially in Germany, in response to the sympathy displayed in Russia, and in the highest quarters there, with objects for the promotion of which the Conference at the Hague was ultimately summoned in the last year of the century. From the regions of diplomacy and administration, this antipathy found its way into academic chairs and into history-books, where it was characteristically transformed into a direct enthusiasm for war and for its value as a moral agency. This strange gospel, too, was not then preached either for the first or the last time. For the rest, whatever may be the results of the Hague Conference, its main purpose, the promotion of a better understanding between the nations, will assuredly be advanced by the series of subsidiary Conferences on subjects of

private international law, which, thanks to the high-minded energy of the Dutch Government, have been carried on in the same capital during the last quarter of the century, and in which most of the States of Europe have taken part—our own, for perhaps hardly sufficient reasons, not being included in their number.

I may perhaps be thought to have strayed outside the limits which I had proposed to myself for my remarks; but it seemed permissible to indicate how some at least of those aspirations which long appeared to have in vain found expression at the time of the assembling of the Congress of Vienna were far from being extinguished by their failure to draw visibly nearer to fulfilment on this unprecedented, and indeed unparalleled international occasion. It would, of course, be an error to conclude that no advance was made at the Congress and in the period of European history which followed, towards better securities than had previously existed for the endurance of the European system of States and towards superior facilities for its development or improvement. The Four Great Powers, which (no doubt, each at the time and under the conditions best suiting its own interests) had entered into the decisive struggle against Napoleonic France, and had carried it to a successful issue, deliberately took it upon themselves, by their action at Vienna, to establish and maintain, in the name and in the interest of Europe at large, the political system elaborated at the Congress. The Four Powers were, indeed, by the dexterous audacity of Talleyrand on his arrival at Vienna, obliged to include the representatives of the whole of the Eight Powers who had signed the Peace of Paris in the



Preliminary Committee of the Congress—and in its work there was really nothing that was not preliminary, except the Final Act. Even this Final Act was technically the Act of the Eight Powers only, the rest of the States of Europe being simply invited to adhere to it. But everyone knew that Spain and Portugal and Sweden were only included, lest France should come in alone—though both Spain and Sweden still cherished a remembrance of the days when they had been numbered among the Great Powers: a remembrance which the 18th Century had not quite taken away from the Swedish Throne, and which perhaps not even the 19th has ended by extinguishing in the hearts of the Spanish people. And even this Committee of the Eight was not very often summoned, especially in the earlier months of the Congress, when its chief task was the appointment of the Special or Sub-Committees to whom the various branches of the business of the Congress were assigned; and the Plenipotentiaries of the Five Great Powers occasionally took it upon themselves to meet without the three supernumeraries. Thus, then, during the all-important months of deliberations preceding Napoleon's return from Elba, the Four Allied Powers, by the side of whom Talleyrand had contrived to establish France as a working fifth wheel of the machine, controlled the destinies of Europe. How completely the remaining States were prepared to follow their lead, was shown by their adhesion to the action taken by the Four Powers on Napoleon's return—the exceptions to the unanimity being Spain and Sweden, whose hesitation only emphasised their actual insignificance. It was,

again, shown by the adhesion of all the European States to the Final Act—with the exception, again, of Spain, this time associated (though his protest was more formal than real) with the Pope.

Whatever may be thought of the way in which this European Committee exercised the authority assumed by it—and I am convinced that the extent, variety and importance of its labours have been alike undervalued—it cannot be gainsaid that a new method had been set on foot, a new departure had been made, in the interests of the Balance of Power, or, in other words, of the Peace of Europe, or, in other words, of the increased prosperity and happiness of its populations. The origin of this innovation has been much mistaken, though nothing could be more certain; and its purposes—I do not say its results—have been consequently misjudged. The Treaty of Chaumont, signed on March 1, 1814, by Lord Castlereagh and the other Plenipotentiaries of the Four Powers who were then, arms in hand, intent upon accomplishing Napoleon's overthrow, not only declared the Peace of Europe to be dependent on the maintenance by their augmented armies of the order of things which they had resolved on establishing in France; but it provided that, in order to arrange future measures for the preservation of peace and to promote a good understanding between the Four Powers, periodical meetings should take place between the Sovereigns in person, or their Plenipotentiaries. This was the system to which the method of procedure at Vienna just described gave practical effect, and which was stereotyped on the same day as that on which the Second Peace of Paris was signed (November 20, 1815) by a further agreement

between the Four Powers. This agreement, while it maintained the exclusion of Napoleon and the Napoleonic dynasty from the French throne, renewed the mutual undertaking of the Allied Sovereigns not only to unite if necessary in common measures of war, but also to meet, at stated intervals, either in person or through their representatives, for the purpose of dealing with matters of interest to them all, and of discussing measures conducive to the tranquility and prosperity of their peoples, and to the preservation of the Peace of Europe. This Paris compact, based on the Treaty of Chaumont, was the actual beginning of the Congressional epoch of 19th century European history—a period as well-marked and, some will say, as barren of results in political, as the Conciliar period of the 14th and 15th centuries was in ecclesiastical, history. But, as I ventured to say before, we must guard against judging within cycles; and we must guard, I may add, against turning the pages of the book of history with too rapid a hand. The Congressional epoch had been practically begun at Vienna, when, as has been noted, France, whose frontiers the Concert of the Allies was to regulate and over whose destinies it was to retain control, was, as a matter of fact, admitted to that Concert, though not unreservedly or unintermittently. The new epoch was formally opened at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, when France was solemnly introduced into the Alliance originally formed against her power; but even then, on the very day when this admission was proclaimed, the Plenipotentiaries of the Four Powers signed a secret Protocol, binding them, if necessary, to consider measures for anticipating the disastrous effects of any new revolutionary agitation which might menace France.

The nations and nationalities which, before the century had passed out of its decades of hope and promise, had lost all faith in the Congressional panacea for their troubles, took a singular revenge upon the system which Metternich christened the Moral Pentarchy of Europe. They taught themselves to mistake and misrepresent its origin, and to confound the cautious stipulations set down by Metternich, Castlereagh, Nesselrode and Hardenberg for the Quadruple Alliance of the future with what the first-named of these statesmen called the verbiage of the Holy Alliance. The principles of the Holy Alliance, which are supposed to have regulated the policy of the Great Powers during a momentous period of European history (and not only poets and journalists, but historians and diplomatists—even such a diplomatist as Bismarck—have encouraged this misapprehension), were the personal aspirations of a single potentate, the Tsar Alexander. They even expressed in a document to which his fellow-sovereigns, the Emperor Francis and King Frederick William of Prussia, had only reluctantly signified their assent, without so much as communicating it to their Cabinets, though Metternich had read it, corrected it here and there, and disliked it as a whole. In a general way, this programme or prospectus (for its character was such rather than that of a definite plan or scheme) was due to the self-consciousness of Alexander I, which had been inevitably increased by the prominence, again inevitable, of the part played by him at Vienna. Russia's share in the final struggle against Napoleon had in some respects been unique in its conditions, and the Tsar's personal power was autocratic in a sense in which this could be



predicated of no other Sovereign at Vienna. But, above all, he had an insatiable ambition to intervene where he could, as a beneficent Providence to which no nation or nationality—Polish, Swiss, German, Hellenic—need appeal in vain and, while Russia pursued all the time the policy of her traditions and that of her interests, to colour the outline of his procedure with hues of his own. The particular design of the Holy Alliance, however, was inspired in him by Baroness von Krüdener, a fascinating woman, who, without the intervening stage of penance common in the lives of saints, had passed from the character of a fashionable beauty into that of a prophetess. When Alexander met her, thereby fulfilling her first prophecy, he had already been prepared for her revelations by the philosopher Franz von Baader's theories as to the necessity of intensifying the Christian element in the government of States, in contravention of the principles of government identified with the French Revolution. I cannot here enter into the more precise bearing of these theories, the reverse of ignoble or unpatriotic in themselves, though tinged by a theosophy which may account for their having been thought to point to the necessity of a union between the spiritual and the temporal headship of Christian communities. They certainly fell upon ground responsive in more senses than one, and accorded with national religious conceptions inherited by the Tsar, as well as with the promptings of personal vanity and jealousy and with the dictates of a political interest, which, to instance but a single phase of it, in the East was Christian or nothing. Nothing could be simpler than the fundamental document of the Alliance signed by the Tsar's

own hand. Using scriptural phraseology, its signatories undertook in conjunction with one another to uphold religion, peace and justice; acknowledging themselves the mere delegates of the one Sovereign of Christendom—the Holy Trinity, devoting themselves to making their peoples happy by enabling them to obey the Divine Will, and welcoming into the Alliance all Powers who accepted its principles.

Besides the Emperor Francis and King Frederick William, King Lewis XVIII afterwards added his signature to this document—a curious agent in the proposed religious regeneration of France; and the Prince Regent of Great Britain, though debarred by the Constitution of his country from entering into personal engagements with foreign Sovereigns, felt himself able to write a letter expressive of his thorough agreement with the principles of the Holy Alliance. But, notwithstanding these edifying signatures and communications, it is the Treaty of Chaumont and the Declaration accompanying the Second Treaty of Paris, and not the Holy Alliance, which represent the outcome of the endeavour permanently to control the re-settlement of Europe after the close of the Napoleonic Wars, by means of a Committee of Great Powers. For Englishmen at least, the distinction, which I may seem to you to have unnecessarily laboured, is historically not insignificant; we may disclaim any national responsibility for the Holy Alliance, in spite of the Prince Regent's approval of it; but into the Congressional policy the British Government consciously entered, and no European Power had a more direct and a more conspicuous share in setting it on

foot. We, therefore, as a nation have a share in its honour and dishonour, in its endeavour to follow aims and satisfy aspirations which have approved themselves to the judgment of history, or which the friends of humanity and the believers in the ultimate progress of our race still continue to cherish,—and, also, in its failures, its self-delusions and its perversity.

Among the benefits which the Congressional system at the very outset directly helped to confer upon mankind, I will only mention one, whose chief credit belongs to our own country, though it was undoubtedly expedited by the machinery of the Congress, which extracted a theoretical assent to our demands even from the most reluctant of the Powers to whom they were addressed. The declaration expressing the desire of the Eight Powers to put a stop to the scourge which had so long desolated Africa, degraded Europe and afflicted the human race, was accompanied by an expression of their intention to carry out the universal abolition of the African Slave-trade with the utmost promptitude possible. The choice of time and season was indeed left to each Power concerned; but the effectiveness of so formal an appeal to public opinion was shown before the Congress of Vienna separated, when Napoleon, on his return from Elba, decreed the immediate abolition of the Slave-trade throughout the dominions of France, and when Lewis XVIII, from Ghent, in order not to be outdone by the usurper, empowered Talleyrand to make the same announcement in the royal name. The question was even so by no means settled; but Great Britain had succeeded in identifying the acknowledged organ of European political action with the progress of this settlement.

I had intended to carry these comments a little further, and to enquire what in the period of the successive Congresses—Aix-la-Chapelle, Troppau, Laibach, Verona—were the aims and aspirations which it was sought to meet, to influence or to evade under the newly organised *tutela* of the Great Powers, which had succeeded to the autocracy of the Napoleonic will. In studying these transactions, we may do well to notice how, as a rule, it is a divergence of interests rather than a preconception of principle which accounts for the inadequacy of the system—an inadequacy which in the end became hopeless. Even at Aix-la-Chapelle, the attention of the Powers was by no means absorbed by their most pressing tasks of safeguarding the Restoration in France, and of correcting the imperfections of the Germanic Confederation; but, though the accord of the Great Powers still seemed unbroken, and Metternich was for the time satisfied with the Tsar, the question of the relations between Spain and her Colonies, which had been ignored at Vienna, already gave rise to differences of view between Russia and Great Britain, and a grouping of the Powers—the incipient negation of the Congressional Concert—had begun. Before the next Congress, the inevitable had happened. The Revolution had broken out in Spain, in Portugal and in Sicily; and at Laibach, in 1821, the determination of the Eastern Powers to intervene directly—in other words, their logical assertion of the right of the Powers (or the majority of them) to assume the character of an international police—led to a schism between the three Eastern and the two Western, and the great protective and representative Alliance was already on the eve of disruption. A year later, at



Verona—where the Eastern Powers dealt with Italian affairs, throughout the peninsula, entirely on the principles on which they had agreed, and where Canning's instructions (not perhaps altogether relished by Wellington) completely severed Great Britain from the other Powers in the matter of the Spanish-American Colonies—the Greek Insurrection, and with it the Eastern Question, knocked at the door. It knocked, as yet, in vain; but a harmonious treatment of these new issues on the part of Russia and Austria was impossible, and a new epoch in the history of Europe opens with the self-assertion of the Hellenic nationality.

The character of that epoch is first conspicuously marked by the French July Revolution of 1830 and by the Belgian Insurrection, ending in the separation of Belgium from Holland, which ensued in close connexion with it. The Powers had to submit to the undoing of the union which had been one of the most elaborately devised of the pieces of constructive work done at Vienna; and with regard to the right of the French nation to determine its own government there was now no longer any attempt at European control. In Spain and Portugal the "legitimate" claimants—for Talleyrand's catchword still held out, though it had lost much of its magic—were now mere pretenders, supported not by the sanction of Congresses, but by voluntary contributions. In Poland, which, notwithstanding the specious promises of the Tsar, had remained a Russian province and a conquered territory, a nation rose within half-a-dozen days; and neither the insurrection nor its suppression left any doubt as to the issue to which they were alike singlemindedly directed.

In the lectures to which you are about to listen and in the studies which these lectures will, I trust, stimulate you to pursue with increasing assiduity and thoroughness, you may not by preference occupy yourselves with the period of the political history of modern Europe on which I have touched this morning, with the Congressional machinery which, originally at first with no purpose either visionary or sinister, it sought to set in motion, or with the aims and aspirations which those who worked this machinery sought to advance, modify or defeat. You may not even find much leisure to spare for a close enquiry into the period of political history which began with the collapse of the Congressional system, and which after witnessing the early triumphs of 1830, came to an end with the collapse of the Revolution of 1848-9.

This epoch, however, was likewise full of aspirations proper to itself, and the field of its history is likewise strewn with memories of insufficient methods and of baffled hopes. The eminent author whom I cited earlier in this address, closes his *Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century*, composed by him when that century had run half its course, and when to less comprehensive minds it might have seemed doomed to begin its endeavours over again, with the expression of a hope that Germany, for whom it might eventually be reserved to exercise an influence in Europe such as had formerly been exercised by France, would follow the example of England in renouncing all ambition to play the part of a conquering State. Her true ideal of action, as it seemed to him, was, on the contrary, the dissolution into federations of those vast State-

unities by which the advance of liberty and that of culture were alike endangered. Even without anticipating the comments which will be offered to you on the history of the application of the Federal principle of government to European politics in the 19th century;—even without, on the other hand, betraying any nervous alarm as to the spectres of Panslavism and Pangermanism which daily walk in sheets;—even without venturing on any speculations as to the ultimate results of the tendencies towards Imperial expansion which have derived so extraordinary an impulse in our own land and elsewhere from patriotic sentiment, from literary demonstration, and from that most powerful of teachers, actual achievement—can anyone of us be blind to the irony of the answer which the last years of the 19th century seem to have returned to the aspirations of the historian of its earlier decades? It is less easy to speculate on the measure of fulfilment which will be granted to the aspirations that have taken their place. But I think that such speculations are scarcely incumbent upon ourselves, and that in the meantime we may be content to rest our faith, as historical students, on laws which the experiences of a century can neither make nor unmake. Our primary task is, after all, to observe, to compare, to record.

To some measure of participation in that task we, being all of us fellow-workers in the same field, most cordially invite you; and, though your leisure we know is limited (but, then, whose is not?) we would gladly help you to turn it to good account. A little advice and a little guidance cannot go a very long way, but how far they will go, depends most upon the learner.

For my part, I could do nothing this morning beyond asking you to accompany me for a brief hour while I recalled a passage or two of my own studies. Others will address you to whom you will listen with more pleasure and with more profit; but we all alike have at heart the twofold purpose of this Summer Meeting, that you should spend some pleasant weeks at Cambridge, and that you should leave this ancient home of learning for learning's sake more resolved than ever to be and remain students in the true sense of the word.

(1920) It is not, I hope, necessary for me to apologise to any kind reader who may take the trouble of comparing this paper with the latter part of that entitled *The Peace of Europe*, with which this Collection of Papers opens, for any repetitions observable in the later address. Nearly a generation separates it from its predecessor in date of delivery; what an addition would have to be made to both in this year of their reprinting!



### 31. PRINCE CHARLES LEININGEN

(*The English Historical Review*, January, 1911)

PRINCE CHARLES LEININGEN was a remarkable figure in the troubled annals of the German revolution of 1848-9; and his personality and its surroundings present a unique combination which is aptly summarised by Dr Valentin. He was at the same time "a prince and a private individual; a large landed proprietor and a liberal; a parliamentarian and a minister; a born ruler and the irresponsible correspondent of crowned heads; a cavalier and a father of his petty people; a courtier and a patriot." Thus it is perhaps a matter for wonder that he should have so long awaited his biographer. Dr Valentin, who is well equipped as a student of the political history of Germany in that fateful period, and who has had access to the ample documentary remains of the Prince's career in the family archives at Amorbach, will, we may hope, at some future time elaborate and expand his present survey of these and other materials into a work that will enduringly preserve in historical literature the memory of a life not to be dismissed as a failure, because it fell almost pitifully short of political success. As it stands, his monograph on *Prince Charles Leiningen and the Problem of German Unity*<sup>1</sup> does not tell us enough of the man to make us thoroughly understand even his political idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, Dr Valentin, at several stages of his historical treatise, seems here and there to go out of

<sup>1</sup> *Fürst Karl Leiningen und des Deutsche Einheitsproblem*: Von Veit Valentin. Stuttgart, J. G. Cotta; 1910.

his way in order to contrast the political principles and aspirations of Prince Leiningen with those of his kinsman, the Prince Consort of England, with whom he was connected by the double tie of cousinship and of the marriage of the younger of the two Princes to Queen Victoria. Doubtless Duke Ernest II of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha misrepresented the relations between the pair in describing Leiningen as the mouthpiece of his kinsman; but their differences of opinion are not always illustrated after a fashion quite fair to the Prince Consort, who was by no means a captive either of his "dynastic" interests or of his personal position. An English critic is justified in adding the remark that "flings" at the policy of a foreign nation are unworthy of an historical writer, more especially of one whose theme is the career of a political thinker notable for the breadth of his sympathies as well as for the generous ardour of his spirit. It is probably true that English public feeling was, in these years and later, frequently lacking in warmth towards German national aspirations; but it is assuredly an oblique reading of history which suggests that in the immediately preceding period England might have "found in Prussia-Germany the friend she always needed for keeping up discord between the continental powers"—had it not been for the impossibility of reconciling her new free trade principles with the protective system of the Zollverein.

Prince Charles Leiningen was one of those votaries of the pen who are such chiefly because the opportunity for personal action is denied to them, in spite of their consciousness of definite aims, and of a strength of will suitable for carrying these into execution. His *Mémoires*

accompanied almost every turn in German politics during the days when hope rose high, only to run down again like the sands in the hourglass. These documents are analysed in succession by Dr Valentin, from the earliest onwards, in which the Prince invited his brother *Standesherren* to abandon most of the privileges of their position, in order to make a wider use of what would remain of them—and even of this he at a later date urged the sacrifice. The series includes the *Mémoire* of November 1849 and the “confession” of 1852, in which the disillusioned advocate of Prussian hegemony turned to the forlorn *pis aller* of cooperation between the two German Great Powers. Nor did he disdain to set in motion the influences of journalism proper, then only beginning to be applied in German political life, and, on occasion, to become a journalist himself.

His own direct political action—as fate would have it, for he was no Quixote—was little else than a series of disappointments. Only in its earliest important phase was it as successful as it was courageous. For there can be little doubt but that in March, 1848—in the breathless interval between the Paris and the Berlin revolutions—it was Leiningen whose high-minded and plain-spoken advice to Lewis I of Bavaria, at the crisis of the conflict between that Sovereign and his exasperated people, induced the King in the midst of his infatuation to yield, and thus to save his Throne, although not for himself. When, soon afterwards, the more complicated problem of German Constitutional Reform seemed suddenly ripening to a solution, and when for a brief moment (literally, for not quite a month) Leiningen was himself, by Stockmar’s advice,

called to preside over the *Reichsverweser's* Ministry at Frankfort, the party pledged to the consummation of national unity and to the firm establishment of the Central Power could not have secured a more acceptable Imperial Prime-Minister than this popular prince. But the refusal of Prussia and her King, whose ears were stopped even to Bunsen's eloquent pleading, proved fatal to the success of the Unitarian programme; while, as the irony of events would have it, Leiningen's Ministry actually fell because it was unable to persuade the National Assembly, in the first instance, to assent to the inevitable, and sanction the Truce concluded by the Prussian Government with the Danish at Malmö. In the time which followed, and in which the absorbing interest of the political situation was the acceptance or refusal of the Imperial Crown by King Frederick William IV, Leiningen no longer held an official position; for his nomination as Imperial Commissioner at Vienna in the days of the Vienna October insurrection came to nothing. But he worked hard for the acceptance of the Crown, more especially by means of his influence in Bavaria. His correspondence with the Princess of Prussia (afterwards Empress Augusta) is very noteworthy, representing on his side a last attempt to bring about the merging of Prussia in Germany, and on hers a steady maintenance of the position that Prussia must make her own terms. What in the future these terms were to be, neither Leiningen nor the sagacious Princess could foresee. But in politics there is, as Leiningen well knew, no finality; though his own ultimate move towards Austria can hardly be described otherwise than as the inconsistency of a "resignation" all but akin to despair.



## 32. THE LETTERS OF GENTZ<sup>1</sup>

(*The English Historical Review*, July 1911, July 1913, October 1913)

THE late Paul Wittichen, before his death in May 1904, had long been engaged in bringing together materials for an adequate biography of Gentz—a literary desideratum of all but the first order. This description is not unwarranted, since Gentz's title to fame lies in his having been one of the chief factors in the overthrow of that Napoleonic *régime* which was the direct offspring of the French Revolution. The support afforded to the elder brother's enterprise by the Wedekind foundation at Göttingen was, hereupon, transferred by it to the younger, F. C. Wittichen, who died in 1909, while he was seeing through the press the earlier of the two volumes now under review. With the continued aid of the mother of the two brothers, Frau Wittichen of Marburg, their undertaking is now being carried on towards completion, and the first two volumes of a contemplated series of four is now actually in our hands. It should be pointed out that, from the first, the plan of this publication has not been to print all the Letters of Gentz; of these, his Correspondence with Johannes von Müller and Adam Müller, his Letters to Pilat, and many other of his letters have already been published by divers editors and in various kinds of framework. The intention was, rather, to supply material that was either new or not

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe von und an Friedrich von Gentz*. Hrsgbn. von Friedrich Carl Wittichen. Vols. I–II. München, Oldenbourg; 1909; III, I and 2. Hrsgbn. von F. C. Wittichen und Ernst Salzer. 1913.

easily accessible; and the volumes before us already show how large was the amount of such material, and how copious is the fresh light thrown by it upon successive stages in Gentz's long and, from some points of view, changeful career. Nothing better, in its way, could be desired than the Introductions which precede each of the series of Letters included in these volumes; while both the notes, so far as I have been able to test them, and the indexes seem likewise exemplary in quality. But the series or groups of Letters inevitably often overlap one another, and the elasticity of Gentz's intellectual, not to say moral, nature thus becomes less evident. Altogether, it is impossible to suppress a regret that so much labour should have been expended upon a preliminary compilation of biographical material; and that this should not have been accompanied by, or actually incorporated into, what might have proved the desired monumental biography. Such seems, indeed, to have been the design of the elder Wittichen, who actually printed three detached chapters of his intended biography; while both he and his brother had contributed various papers on particular aspects of the political and literary activity of Gentz, or on criticisms of him, to periodical publications.

The first of the successive series of Letters contained in these volumes stands apart from the rest, in so far as it brings Gentz before us at a stage in his life when he was still but little concerned with politics. They belong mainly to the years from 1785 to 1787, in the earlier of which (called by the young man "the golden year" of his life) he entered the public service at Berlin. A portion of his letters to "Elisabeth" has

already been published; and not a few of them have found their way into the Appendix of a volume of Reminiscences put forth by the lady to whom they were addressed, though, in this odd compound of fact and fiction, most of them are ascribed to an imaginary count, for whose portrait another adorer supplied the leading features. At the time of Gentz's intimacy with Elisabeth von Staegemann, to call her by her subsequent name, she was living as the wife of a Government official named Graun, a son of the wellknown composer, at Königsberg, where Gentz was studying law, as well as philosophy under Kant. The relations between "Gentze" (so he usually signs himself, apparently in deference to the usage of the French colony at Berlin, to which, however, he only belonged by maternal descent) and his adored "Graunin" are typical of the most pronounced species of late 18th century sentimentalism. This school, of which the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* was the Founder, was the prophet-in-chief, and "Ossian" and Young were among the minor prophets, was never really happy except when playing with fire. Gentz, as the philosopher and friend, rather than the lover, of Elisabeth, preached to her cheerful resignation as towards her husband (with whom she was not happy), gentle consideration as towards her admirer, Le Noble (whom she wished to keep at a distance), and absolute sincerity of intellectual communion as towards himself (who was engaged to a young lady of her acquaintance). Though in the end Gentz's engagement was broken off and Elisabeth was divorced from her first husband, the relations between the correspondents were perfectly "platonic"; nor did

he make her an offer of marriage on his own behalf till he was himself a married man and, therefore, in every sense, belated. A curious epistle, which bears no date, but appears to belong to the period 1789-90, seems to show that about this time he came forth from a more ordinary psychological crisis, stronger in both will and intellectual fitness; and in the second series of Letters contained in the first of these volumes, we find a man who, though still with some traces of juvenility, is beginning to understand himself and his task in life.

The second group of Letters here printed consists of those written by Gentz in the years 1789-91, with a few of later date, to Christian Garve. Unluckily, what might prove to be the most interesting portion of their correspondence remains at present undiscovered. Garve's popular philosophy, and the clear and pleasing style in which it is conveyed, gives him a permanent place in the history of German culture; moreover, he did some good public service by historical and political writings which connect the days of Frederick the Great with the early efforts in favour of progress made after the death of his successor. With Garve Gentz was brought into contact through his paternal connexion with Breslau, where the former was settled as professor, and whence Gentz induced him to pay a long visit to Berlin for an ophthalmic cure. These Letters are interesting as material for a history of Gentz's political opinions, inasmuch as they indicate, rather than exhibit, the transition from an enthusiastic confidence in the success of the French Revolution in December, 1790, to a convinced detestation of the "hellish tyranny" of the "accursed" revolutionary



Government in April, 1798. The earliest essay ever published by Gentz (in the *Berliner Monatsschrift* of April, 1791) discussed "the origin and the supreme principles of law," and was a defence of the *droits humains* against an attack by Justus Möser. The process of Gentz's conversion was hastened, if not determined, by Burke's *Reflections*, which, though published nearly six months earlier, did not come into his hands till about the middle of April, 1791, as he, very wisely, refused to read translations. He then wrote to Garve:

Certainly, this man deserves to be heard, as all those deserve who possess a mastery over speech. However much I am opposed to the principles of this book and to its conclusions (but I have not yet quite finished it), I read it with infinitely greater pleasure than a hundred shallow eulogies of the Revolution; indeed, I would always rather listen to the opponent of my favourite opinions, if he is worth anything himself, than to a defender of them.

In the present instance, this openness of mind, which helps to explain Gentz's unsurpassed success as a publicist, resulted in his bringing out, in 1793, a translation of Burke's great tract—the translation being itself distinguished by evidence, in the notes, of a thorough knowledge of the subject, as well as by an admirable style. In the following year appeared Gentz's translation of Mallet du Pan's work on the French Revolution, of which Gentz had now become a declared adversary. Few statesmen can have followed the course of the movement—whether under its general aspects or from the special point of view of economy and finance—with so close an attention as was devoted to

it by the young Berlin official. It seems strange that the *History of the French Revolution*, with which he was at this time occupied, and of which five volumes, with an index, in manuscript, are stated to be in the possession of the editor of this correspondence, should remain unpublished. An adequate biography, founded upon the material now brought together, could hardly fail to reawaken such an interest in him as would justify the publication of this early work. Gentz writes, in 1798, that, when his official work allowed, he devoted two days in the week exclusively to the reading of newspapers and to excerpting or classifying their news—working regularly on five large French journals, besides a number of German, Dutch, and English papers. The labour expended by him upon his researches was enormous and his enthusiasm unbounded; in 1802, we find him writing that it is “a misfortune to have been a political writer in the days of the French Revolution. It makes the work now seem insipid, and oneself feel like an extinct volcano.”

Gentz's correspondence with Karl August Böttiger, which makes up the last of the series included in the first of these volumes, shows him hard at work as a political student and writer; but it covers so large a span of years (from 1795 to 1810) as to afford strong proof of the disadvantage of the method of arrangement adopted by the editors. Böttiger, best known as the author of *Sabina*, the prototype, on a smaller scale, of *Gallus* and other productions of a similar kind, was a polyhistor of extraordinary capacity, and editor of a large number of journals of various sorts; he was a literary personage of some importance in his day,

though he neither stood on the heights, nor cherished much sympathy for their occupants. At Weimar, where he long resided, he ultimately fell out with Goethe and Schiller; it is, as may be said in passing, not creditable to Gentz that he should have accepted Böttiger's opinion of *Faust*, when first published as a "tragedy" in 1808. Böttiger was subsequently transferred from Weimar to Dresden in the characteristic capacity of superintendent of the studies of the Court pages (*Pagerie*); but it was from, and in, the former capital more especially that his knowledge of books and periodical literature had been of constant service to Gentz.

In the earlier period of this correspondence Gentz was still a Prussian official, and has much to say about the administrative changes consequent upon the accession of Frederick William III. For a time, it seemed as if the conduct of affairs would fall enduringly into the hands of Anastasius Mencken, a politician of real mark, who was possessed of something of the independence of mind and fearlessness of spirit which were to mark his famous grandson, Bismarck. Gentz, whose views in favour of the prevention of war were approved by the new King, though the latter could hardly but resent his audacity in offering good advice on things in general in a letter addressed direct to the Sovereign, missed the opportunity, if he actually desired it, of obtaining a subordinate Ministerial post. He was growing tired of office work under an exacting chief, and his repugnance against the policy of neutrality which Prussia continued to pursue, and which, in the years 1799-1801, he opposed in the *Historische Journal*

set on foot by him, heightened his dislike of his position at Berlin. He was not content with Berlin society, though he afterwards regretted the loss of it; nor was he likely elsewhere to find friends and acquaintances such as those to whom he had here owed much intellectual stimulus—such men as Ancillon, and above all Wilhelm von Humboldt, for whom he entertained a deep regard, though it was varied by censorious outbursts<sup>1</sup>. It is also obvious, from his letters to Brinckmann noticed below, that he was on terms the reverse of cordial with the Jewish element in Berlin society, and with what he calls the “indirect Jews” of the world of learning and letters. Notwithstanding his intimacy with the “little Levy” (Rahel), his gibes against those of her race were incessant; and it can hardly be anything but a jest when he represents himself as having, in 1801, been appointed chairman of one of the commissions of supervision to which the Berlin Jews were subjected. Finally, private difficulties, which may be passed by here but which ended in his divorce, contributed to make a change of residence desirable, and, in 1802, he quitted Berlin, in order finally to establish himself at Vienna. Before he actually settled down there, he, in the winter of 1802-3, in the company of Sir Hugh Elliot, paid a visit to England, where he was welcomed both by the leading statesmen and by the public press as (to quote *The Courier*) “the ablest defender of England and the greatest political economist in Europe.” His position in the political world was thus nearing

<sup>1</sup> To W. von Humboldt, Gentz is found applying Voltaire's impious witticism, that if the Deity did not exist He would have to be invented.



its height, and if ever a man of the pen can be said to have rivalled the "grand style" of the rulers of States or the leaders of fashion, it was Gentz in the remaining part of his life, and more especially during the progress of the great European struggle *cuius pars magna fuit*. He had renounced ordinary journalistic or other literary work for the great occasions on which the services of his pen were in demand—services paid in fair proportion to their value, but never, it has been justly said, venally rendered. Early in 1810, we find him informing the publisher Perthes that Napoleon had changed his opinion of the character of the opposition carried on against him by his persistent assailant, and had prohibited all reviling of him in the French or philo-French papers.

Three-fourths of the second of these volumes are occupied by Gentz's correspondence with a Swedish man of affairs and letters, whose bust in bronze welcomes visitors to the Deergarden at Stockholm, and whose personality during the long evening of his life held a similarly prominent place in the regards of his countrymen. Karl Gustav von Brinckmann, the son of a Swedish Court-councillor, was trained for the trials of life in the Moravian school at Barby, where he had Schleiermacher for his classmate. Like the philosopher, although from a different point of view, Brinckmann was fain at an early date to throw off the shackles of his school discipline; his genius was, in fact, wholly antagonistic to the influences to which it had been subjected; even as a poet, though not out of touch with serious thoughts, he never imbued himself with them. On the other hand, he had a rare sense of

the beauty of form and of the value of words: Goethe submitted to him for final revision the verse of his *Hermann und Dorothea*, and Gentz repeatedly extols and exemplifies his unequalled aptness in quotation and in what was then, in its way, a fine art, the devising of mottoes. But, notwithstanding his Horatian turn of mind, and though, at Halle and elsewhere, he had thoroughly saturated himself with German intellectual culture, Brinckmann elected to serve his apprenticeship as a clerk in the Swedish Foreign Office. On the death of Gustavus III, he was delighted to be attached to the Swedish Legation at Berlin, where he remained from 1792 to 1797 and, after an interval in the Legation at Paris, from 1801 to 1806. Thus, his residence in the Prussian capital coincided with part of Gentz's busiest life there, and it seems hardly too much to say that the receptive Swede became the most devoted of the great publicist's personal friends, as well as one of the most congenial of his associates. Brinckmann is quoted as having, in 1816, told a friend:

We were all of us really Gentz's disciples, and all of us, not in obedience to the dictates of passion, but from pure, firm, well-founded conviction, became resolute anti-revolutionaries and champions of royalty—all, with the exception of the Humboldts, of whom the learned traveller regarded all politics as beneath his dignity, while the other was equally pleased to mock at king-makers and at republics.

Nor was it only in politics that Gentz and Brinckmann went hand in hand: their literary sympathies, their preference, at heart, for the classicists as against the romanticists, and their love of style for its own sake, formed an almost equally strong link between them.

They equalled one another in their love of books; and nothing could be more amusing than the succession of exchanges and bargains in which Brinckmann's longer purse seems to have given him the advantage over his irretentive friend. Their love of the most select society and its refinements, their peccadilloes, and their anti-Jewish prejudices, were among other points of agreement between them. Thus, they remained intimates even after Gentz's departure from Berlin in 1802, mentioned above.

His correspondence with Brinckmann after that date, while it supplements his already published letters and diaries from almost every point of view, accordingly, forms perhaps the most interesting section of these volumes. Towards this friend *eiusdem farinae* Gentz shows himself, as he actually was, aware that his weaknesses hardly less than his successes (for he took some pride in both), were being detailed to an appreciative reader; his boastfulness as to his political influence, his social popularity, and his incomparable style here becomes a mere series of naïve expressions. His story of his love for Amalia von Imhof, before whose charms he had fallen prostrate at Weimar, and whom he here represents himself as having afterwards, practically, jilted, and his encouragement of his friend's infatuation for Pauline Wiesel, afterwards the mistress of Prince Lewis Ferdinand of Prussia, flow with the same ease from his familiar pen. Of Brinckmann's letters (which, we may conclude, were more self-contained), there are few till near the close of the correspondence; an elaborate and extremely well-written comparison between the intellectual genius of Germany and that of

France, written by Brinckmann in 1807 at Memel, where he was in attendance upon the half-exiled Prussian Court, was not sent by him to Gentz till seven years later. The accomplished Swede's later fortunes, which included his service as Minister in London from 1808 to 1810, cannot occupy us here; he survived till 1847.

Gentz's life at Vienna from 1803 to 1805, and during the period of "Emigration" which succeeded the catastrophe of the Third Coalition, is, as observed, largely illustrated in this correspondence. During these years, though enjoying a title and a salary bestowed by the Emperor, he was not, technically, any more in the Austrian service than he was in that of Great Britain; it was, he declared, "the cause," rather than any particular Power, which he served. Yet his position was so unique; his knowledge was so varied, so thorough, and so readily at his command; his power of apprehending the political situation and of influencing it when he put pen to paper for *mémoires*, expositions, or prefaces, was so universally acknowledged; and his social talents were so striking—he seems, when, as he says, he "became warm," to have spoken with the same ease and eloquence with which he wrote—that he was speedily admitted into the most exclusive circles of what claimed to be the most exclusive society in Europe. Thus, he could afford to cast off, with a scorn that sits unpleasantly even on him, the Jewish props which had supported him on his entrance into Viennese life. Yet what really, in these most strenuous years of his life, stood him in stead above all other aids, was the indomitable strength of will which constitutes the single



element in his character and conduct that approaches greatness. Not only was he thus enabled to help, more perhaps than any other of his compatriots, to keep up the struggle against Napoleon and against the Napoleonic idea as the offspring of the Revolutionary; but his boast was not vain that, among the supporters of the cause of Resistance in the world of letters, not a single one had proved a deserter, except Johannes von Müller. This eminent man, with all his learning and all his talent, there was no trusting; and, in a curious passage, Gentz speaks of having talked him out of writing a History of Frederick the Great, while leaving him to go on with his *History of the Swiss Confederation* as much as he chose.

Of the statesmen with (rather than under) whom he worked at Vienna, Gentz was, as is known, better disposed to Stadion than to his rivals; even among the Archdukes he learnt before long to discriminate, magnifying the respectable qualities of Archduke John to the disadvantage of those of Archduke Charles, his military talents excepted. Among the diplomatists his chief intimates were the Swedish Minister, Baron Armfelt, and the Russian Count Nikita Panin, then out of employment. Of his relations with Metternich, of course, only the earlier stages are here to be traced. His earliest mention, in 1803, of the future Chancellor as a person of charming manners and cultivated intellect has an almost patronising air; in 1804 he playfully reflects on the Prince's indolence at Berlin; but already at the close of this year he sends him a deferential message. In 1811, by which time Metternich had assumed the direction of Foreign Affairs at Vienna,

Gentz dwells complacently on the confidential relations between them, and, in answer to the Prince's pressing invitation, is preparing once more to take up his residence permanently at Vienna. Even then, he could hardly have foreseen that though in a fashion which—with his strong anti-Russian leanings—might not at the time have seemed acceptable to him, his "programme" was in the end to triumph. So it is in politics; and, after Gentz became more and more of a working wheel in the State-machine, he was, during his long co-operation with Metternich, more and more called upon to learn the necessity of compromise.

The last of the series of Letters contained in these volumes—Gentz's correspondence with Adam Müller—merely supplements that already published, and adds little to our knowledge of a genius, one of the most curious products of the Romantic movement, for whom and whose paradoxical metaphysics Gentz had conceived an enthusiastic regard, perhaps in part due to the fact that their natures were, in a sense, supplementary to each other. So far as Gentz's own life and development were concerned, these Letters interest us chiefly from two points of view—the first, the feeling of *Heimweh* which Gentz felt for Berlin after he had quitted it, so that he actually contemplated a quasi-incognito sojourn there; the second, that, though he never, like Adam Müller, became a convert to Rome, his sympathies were so far Catholic that he grew thoroughly antagonistic to the principles and processes of the Reformation. Stronger than his power of critical analysis, stronger than his intellectual interest in whatever was progressive and illuminating, stronger than

the disintegrating and decadent tendencies of his self-indulgence, which even the correspondence with Adam Müller, the friend of his soul, illustrates, was the conservative element in his volition. Of this he was himself aware in his most lucid introspective moments; and it inspired his finest writings and the most signal efforts of his life.

The progress of this definitive edition of Gentz's correspondence is not rapid; but the surviving editor of his Letters is naturally anxious that nothing should be wanting to it in completeness, and he is now engaged on what all students of political history must consider the most important part of his task. Unfortunately, the earlier section of the correspondence between Gentz and Metternich includes no letters from the great Minister dated earlier than 1819; of this year, however, not less than ten letters, some of them possessing very great interest, have found their way into the present instalment of the work, and raise the expectation of a much larger harvest of the same kind in the next. With the exception of an introductory essay on Gentz and Metternich by the late Dr F. C. Wittichen, which was well worth reprinting, and an Appendix or two containing more or less paradoxical contributions to the burning questions of the day by Adam Müller, Gentz's letters to Metternich during the years 1803-19 make up the whole of this ample volume, in which, accordingly, there is hardly a dull page. Of course, Gentz's epistolary style, even when he is addressing his "adored Prince," makes no pretence to the severity and sensitiveness to which he laid claim in the matter

of published compositions; but, though (to put it bluntly) his flattery is occasionally laid on rather thick, while he plays the part of the squire of great ladies a little too effusively, he is always to the point and, neither in his French nor in his German letters, lays himself open to the sarcasm levelled at the declarations of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle drafted by him: that everything in them "*qui n'est pas clair est allemand.*"

Dr Wittichen's introductory essay is very useful in calling the attention of the reader to certain features in the development of the political views of Metternich and Gentz, and of their relations to each other, which, so far as space permits, I should not like to leave unmentioned in this brief notice of their correspondence. Thus, he points out, with what seems to me perfect truth, that, though Metternich was to a very considerable extent responsible for Austria's rising in 1809, he had not actually made up his mind as to her entering into war against Napoleon, and still less as to seeking to compass his utter downfall. On the other hand, Gentz, who, after Austerlitz, had refused to give way to what he called "subjective despair," remained faithful, at least till the real crisis was over, to his oft-repeated *Delendus est*. His letter of 12 January 1806, in which he lays down his creed, without for a moment supposing its main article to possess even a calculable chance of achievement, is as fine a delivery as any of his public appeals; and, in 1809, when Austria's second effort had failed, he could describe himself, with just self-consciousness, as absolutely the only German writer who from first to last had held out for the great cause of the political independence



of Europe. Nor was his perseverance (if it is not to be called by a higher name) by any means only due to patriotic or loyal impulses; it was also founded on his conviction as a political historian, observer, and (it may be added without scruple) moralist, that the Napoleonic *régime* was not destined to endure. When, in May 1812, Metternich had set forth for his memorable Dresden interview with Napoleon, then on the eve of his Russian campaign, Gentz told the Minister that he would find the Emperor "*changed*, by which he meant *sunk*"; and Metternich, on his return to Vienna, confirmed this impression. From that day onward, as Gentz afterwards prided himself in recalling, the liberation of Europe seemed no longer problematic to him; but he had, before the concussion, foreseen the collapse. After the victory had been won, the account to which it should be turned became to him a matter of secondary interest, and we find him in favour of a moderate peace with the defeated adversary, and strongly against the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France.

Gentz, while the reverse of a fanatic and quite out of sympathy with saints, was indisputably a politician of high principle. And as such, at times, his "dissertations" were not altogether to the taste of his correspondent, who complained of his caring more for measures than for men. But, although Gentz, in his turn, did not refrain from criticising Metternich, to others as well as to himself, the relations between the pair were friendly long before Gentz, tired of most things, became less and less positive in the statement of divergences between his own views and the policy of

his Chief. It should not be overlooked that Metternich upheld Gentz against the disfavour with which he was regarded by many persons at Court, and only with difficulty prevailed upon the Emperor Francis II, who unmistakably shared in this dislike, to vouchsafe some mark of recognition of Gentz's invaluable services. It was not till 1813 that, together with a far from excessive gratuity, he obtained the title of *Hofrat*, which, he says, the public had long given him *abusivè*, or till a year later that he was permitted to wear the official uniform of the Chancery. He never attained either to the great ribbon of St Stephen (which Cobenzl had "not seriously" prophesied to him) or to the legitimate object of his ambition, the title and rank of *Staatsrat*. It is these things that make life bitter to some minds, which it would be foolish to designate as small.

This correspondence begins with Gentz's return from London, his references to which are *couleur de rose*. In many later passages of the present volume, we notice the warmth of his feeling towards a country which had received him so well and which turned his talents to such excellent account. He rejoiced in the wealth of her resources, and instead of despairing of her affairs on the news of the death of Pitt, sat down to compose an essay intended to dispel the gloom that had seized upon a large part of the English public with regard to the political prospects of Europe. In a letter of doubtful date (1810 or 1812), he emphasises his repeated defence of Great Britain's maritime policy, as defined in the Orders in Council, against the "tissue of coarse actual untruths" with which it had been met by the French Government. And, besides admiring this

country, he knew something of its ways, distinguishing between the Ministry and the Prince-regent's "secret Cabinet," and possessing a fair insight into the influence of the newspapers. Hopefulness is a general characteristic of his correspondence, after he had, in 1803, settled down at Vienna, where he at last felt happy in the life which in his opinion made this, with perhaps St Petersburg added, the only European capital in which life could be really enjoyed. Things had changed when, in 1814, he wrote to Metternich that the Duchess of Sagan's jeremiads about Viennese society were only too true, and that faith and charity had been exchanged for selfishness and arrogance—or, more certainly, the man himself had changed; he was beginning to be worn out by the troubles and, still more, by the self-indulgences of his life; he was growing, or was persuading himself that he had grown, *blasé* towards its enthusiasms, and, as this collection of Letters very fully demonstrates, was disappointed by the limits to the success of his personal career. Between these dates, he had passed through a period which included some of the most splendid of his services to Austria and Europe; yet he had but very gradually gained the command of the ear of the statesman destined to control for more than a generation the destinies of his adopted country. After the catastrophe of 1805, he had withdrawn, first to Dresden, where he completed the publication which has been rightly described as his last independent piece of political writing, the celebrated *Fragments from the most recent History of the Political Balance of Power in Europe*, and then to Prague, which remained his chief place of abode till the end of 1808, and whence he

seems only towards the end of his sojourn to have written to Metternich. Even after, on the failure of the Austrian War of 1809 against Napoleon, he had laid before the Minister a long memorandum, already known to historians, on the condition of things in Austria, and had repeatedly placed his services at the statesman's disposal, no complete confidence was shown to Gentz by Metternich, and their personal relations varied accordingly. From the middle of 1813, however, the letters of the former continue in an uninterrupted series, and from Prague, and, after the close of the year from Vienna, there flowed a constant stream of counsel, critical though deferential, and full of life and point as to every theme with which it dealt. *Inter alia*, he appears as a kind of supreme director of journalistic influences: the *Österreichische Beobachter*, in its developed form, was really his creation; the Prague newspapers, of much importance because of the situation of the Bohemian capital, were at one time controlled by him as Censor; and the readers of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* frequently divined the presence of his particularly well-informed pen. Meanwhile, to his old preeminence as the public orator or herald of the State on occasions of the highest moment was added the high office of Secretary to the great international Congresses of the age. As he reminded Metternich in 1816, he had the honour of composing the Austrian Declaration of War of 1813, as he had written that of 1809, and "his hand held the pen in the greatest political transactions of 1814 and 1815, and performed its task in such a way that the President of the Congress and Chief Minister of State more than once expressed to him his unrestricted approval."



Gentz's secretarial services were again called into request at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818. Before this, Metternich had had resort to his correspondent's expert advice in matters financial, with which the Chancellor concerned himself as little as possible; and now they began—in an unhappy moment—to cooperate in a long-sustained endeavour to set back the clock in the internal political life of the nation. But, though the letters of both Metternich and Gentz concerned with the Carlsbad Decrees and their causes and consequences included in the last hundred pages in vol. III of this series form perhaps the most interesting part of its contents, they break off before these fateful informal Conferences were finished, and may be more appropriately noticed when the publication of this part of the present collection shall have been completed. In the meantime, as Varnhagen and other political gossips have discussed the question of the actual authorship of the Carlsbad project, it may be well to note how, so early as April 1819, Gentz suggested that the “epuration” of the German university chairs and the question of pressing preliminary measures might advantageously be discussed at Carlsbad in the summer. More important problems were to be reserved for conferences between representatives of the chief German Courts in the winter, and the Frankfort *gremium* was, in accordance with its deserts, to be left out altogether.

We have dealt at so much length with previous parts of the late Dr Wittichen and Dr Salzer's standard collection of Gentz's correspondence that a brief notice must suffice of the new volume, which deals

with his correspondence with Metternich in the years 1820-32. It is full, indeed, of amusing as well as interesting detail, such as Metternich's no doubt authentic account of the offer to him of a cardinalate, and his unkind denunciation, echoed by Gentz, of the projected foundation of the University of London as certain to be followed, within five years, by the downfall of England. But, as a whole, this portion of the correspondence is, in so far, disappointing that of German affairs in the period from the Carlsbad Decrees onwards (the volume begins with a notice of an offensive article in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* on the execution of Sand) we hear comparatively little, while, from the numerous communications concerning Austrian policy, and its conflict with Russian, on the subject of the Greek Insurrection, we gather the impression that Gentz had no important influence upon their course. At first, he seems content to reflect, though more faintly, Metternich's settled opinion that the Insurrection must collapse; and it is not till August 1825 that he ventures to point out that the end is not so near as might perhaps be concluded from the recent great successes of the Porte.

As a matter of fact, Gentz's relations to Metternich during the twelve years covered by this volume appear to have been mainly threefold. In the first instance, he supervised the Austrian Press, specially directing the Vienna *Beobachter*, while at the same time having an eye to German newspapers published outside Austria, more especially to the Augsburg *Allgemeine*, "the great repertory of indiscreet intelligence," and even to foreign journals, French in particular. It is instruc-

tive to notice the wrath excited in this great publicist and journalist, as well as in his chief (who, on at least one occasion, did not disdain himself to write an article in a French paper against Canning), by the freedom of journalistic comment. Gentz is for ever girding at the licence of the papers, and even proposes to advocate an international prohibition of attacks upon the "chief authorities" of foreign States—such as his revered correspondent. In the meantime, he was actively employed by Metternich in the journalistic propaganda of his schemes—the *quomodos* (to use his own phrase) which were constantly suggesting themselves to his diplomatic mind. In the second place, Gentz's pen was always at the Chancellor's service for the revision, and at times for the formulation, of State papers—both drafts of communications to the Diet, such as the presidential proposals to it on the renewal of the Carlsbad Decrees, and despatches, such as the secret letter to Canning in reply to his *dépêche réservée*, brought to Vienna, towards the close of 1824, by Stratford Canning, in defence of Great Britain's defection from the St Petersburg Conferences. Finally, Gentz makes his appearance in this volume as Metternich's literary *alter ego*—but an *alter ego* who, as the great statesman's curious letter on the character of Napoleon, drafted by him for posterity, shows, was not to be at liberty to modify anything but the form of the original composition. On the whole, Metternich's sensitiveness as a historical writer does him honour, and it is no hollow phrase (a thing which he describes himself as detesting) when he summarises his view of Napoleon as, "not a great man, but endowed with

great qualities and still greater faults." For himself, he was at least a good hater:

Your opinion of Pozzo has been mine for a score of years. There is something in my nature which drives me straightway, as scent drives a pointer, at certain individuals; no sooner have I had a sniff at them, than they are off as fast as they can, and then there is no question of any further approach between us. These men are always great adventurers, such as Pozzo, Capodistria, Armfeldt, d'Antraigues, &c. Without my knowing them personally, my nature strains against them. There is also another sort of men, with whom I do not succeed any better: of this sort are Chateaubriand, Canning, Haugwitz, Stein, &c. My instincts go against them also, but in a different way. I could almost undertake to qualify each individual at our first meeting.

Pozzo, he kindly adds, "will end by an awful fall."



### 33. THE STEIN MONUMENT

*(The Manchester Guardian, October 29, 1875)*

ON Tuesday last [October 26th, 1875] Berlin witnessed a ceremony of great national interest in the unveiling of the statue of Stein. The statue, we are informed, has, for some time, been in preparation or contemplation. It is true that things move more and more rapidly in the Germany of the present day; and, while there was some colour for the humorous statement that the subscription list for the monument recently erected to Armin the Liberator was originally opened on the morrow of the victory in the Teutoburger Wald, the operations which have resulted in the erection of the Berlin monument to the great Prussian Minister, who was likewise a Liberator in his generation, appear to have begun not more than seventeen years ago. But German sentiment, though not always swift-footed in the execution of its schemes, is as tenacious as it is truehearted; nor is the present the earliest tribute of respect to a name which Germany at large, as well as Prussia in particular, has reason to revere. A monument in Stein's honour was erected on the banks of his native Lahn already in 1872, when the distinguished historian Heinrich von Sybel delivered a noteworthy oration. But it was fitting that the memory of the great statesman should be specially honoured in the capital of the State to whose regeneration he gave so incomparably important an impulse, in the neighbourhood of that House of Deputies whose most useful labours

have been, to so great an extent, based upon his ideas, and in the political centre of that new German Empire to whose future his self-sacrificing efforts pointed the way.

The life and political career of Stein are familiar to students from the massive biography of Pertz, which has been successfully reduced to a more popular form in his own country, and which will doubtless supply the foundations of a work upon which, if report speaks true, an eloquent English writer is now engaged<sup>1</sup>. With the views Professor Seeley is known to hold as to the relations between history and politics, he is not likely to neglect the material, almost embarrassing in its abundance, at hand for a narrative of the progress and results of the ideas originated and cherished by one of the most fertile, as he was one of the most steadfast, of modern politicians. If true political greatness consists in preparing or calling into life creations capable at once of endurance and of development, then Stein was a political genius of the very highest order, and the piety with which his name is regarded by thinkers and statesmen, as well as by the popular instinct, is neither exaggerated nor misplaced. He was not the founder of the Prussian State any more than was the great Frederick himself, under whose reign he commenced to serve it; but he was the creator of a system of internal government which has gradually accomplished that organic union between State and people—the one great desideratum of the intelligent despotisms or bureaucracies of the 18th century—lying at the root of the advance

<sup>1</sup> Seeley's *Life and Times of Stein*, was actually published by the Cambridge University Press in 1878.

of Prussia to strength at home and to her present commanding European position. It is true that even such a genius as Stein's cannot control the future, and that in Prussia all has not been done either in the manner or in the sequence of the plan which he had conceived, when, in 1807, he consented to return into the service of King Frederick William III. Thus, he desired, above all, to begin with the establishment of a system of local government in the provinces of the monarchy; but his administration had long come to an end, and he himself and a generation after him, had passed away, before, in our own day, the Prussian administration was reorganised in the spirit of this fundamental conception. But the intellectual legacy he left behind him was cherished by such men as Gneist, whose name appropriately appears in the list of the original Committee of the Berlin Stein Monument; and his ideas of provincial self-government, though overtaken in their progress towards realisation by that of his and other men's views on the more popular subject of parliamentary representation, have borne tardy, but, it is to be hoped, satisfactory fruit in the new Order of the Circles in the Prussian monarchy.

There are many other questions, partly settled for ever, partly ripening towards solution, associated with the brief period during which Stein stood at the head of the Prussian Administration. It is said to have been cut short by the insolent tyranny of Napoleon, though he had himself advised King Frederick William to take Stein in place of Hardenberg, upon whose dismissal the Emperor insisted. Take the Baron de Stein, said

the despot, accustomed to the service of brilliant adventurers, "*c'est un homme d'esprit.*" Stein came, though he might well seem to quail before the task he was seeking to accomplish, because it was, he wrote, a task of Sisyphus. But, before the decree of the foreign tyrant drove Stein into exile, his extraordinary activity had accomplished many vital reforms for ever associated with his name, and had laid the foundations of others. The abolition of hereditary serfdom, the proclamation of general liability to military service, and the beginnings of a Liberal commercial policy, are among his titles to the gratitude of Prussia. But what gave rise to the continuity of ideas between his statesmanship and that of his most competent successors was the vital principle of his entire statesmanship. He sought at once to raise the people and to strengthen the State, by establishing that mutual relation between rights and duties, and that general civic participation in the machinery of public life which Prussia, and Germany at large, had hitherto lacked. Though, in one sense, a genuine aristocrat, he aspired to the removal of the separation of classes, which had long been a characteristic feature of the Prussian monarchy; and, though only partially successful, yet he helped to produce that sense of a general share in the life of the State which has stood Prussia in so good a stead in the great crises of her later history. But—as he says in the document which he drew up as a political legacy in the days following upon his forced dismissal—"precepts and ordinances cannot do" that which is, above all other things, necessary. In the religious life of the people, based on a thorough system of education, he recognised its truest strength. The



difficulties which the growth of the autocratic tendencies of ecclesiasticism was to bring upon the State he could not foresee, though he deprecated their faint beginnings. A devout Lutheran, he was at the same time a true Liberal in religious matters and warmly encouraged that revival of religious life among the Catholics with which, in his days, it was still possible for a Lutheran to sympathise.

Naturally enough, in the popular mind, the memory of Stein is chiefly connected with his efforts, in and after his exile, against the despot who had driven him from the Prussian service. The Sovereign who sheltered the fugitive—Alexander I of Russia—was, for good and for evil, the most impressionable of monarchs; and it would probably be difficult to overrate the influence exerted by Stein upon the beginnings of Napoleon's overthrow. It was he, too, who undertook the difficult task of administering, jointly with a Russian colleague, the territories which were to be definitively liberated from the foreign dominion. His schemes for the reconstitution of Germany fell to the ground like many others, and the remainder of his life brought him long days of disappointment and bitterness. But he never swerved from his principles, and never lost his patriotic enthusiasm. The progress of national life, like all operations of Providence, gradually accomplishes itself, and not in one way only. It is, therefore, with reason that German scholars point to the fact that the greatest national literary undertaking of historical research was originated by Stein. His efforts for the *Monumenta Germanica* have been described by their first editor, Stein's biographer, as the main task of his private life

in its later days. There is an amusing anecdote of the boy Stein assuming in a juvenile performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that there was but one part he would play. "I," said he, "can do the Wall." In the speeches delivered at Berlin we shall duly expect to find a repetition of the time-honoured conceit that Stein was the foundation-stone of the good, the stumbling-stone of the bad, and the precious stone of all, Germans. Such flowers of speech may be left to festive oratory. We shall learn, in time, what inscription has been placed upon the monument of the great man whose glory it is to have served Prussia in her hour of darkness, and not to have despaired of her future, even when he was debarred from directly promoting her recovery. Meanwhile, it would be difficult to sum up the character of one whose moral greatness is his loftiest title to the veneration of posterity better than in the touching words inscribed upon his tombstone at Frücht by his children. The aspiration with which they conclude we do not quote; it gives expression to that longing for peace which such a man must have felt almost to overpower him in the days of selfishness, meanness and pettiness which had then befallen the common country he had helped to save. But, while intellectual genius may, a truly great character cannot but, live itself; and Stein's life is of a piece in all its parts and throughout the whole of its varying course. "He was," runs the inscription, "humble before God and high-minded towards men; the foe of lies and of injustice; greatly gifted in his spirit of duty and loyalty; inflexible when an outlaw and an exile; the son, whose own head remained erect, of a humiliated fatherland;

one of the Liberators of Germany in conflict and in victory." His greatness is, therefore, one which none need fear to misread or scruple to honour, but which history has already raised above the level of mere local or even national appreciation. For Stein was great in what he achieved, and great in the ideas which he bequeathed to be achieved by those who came after him; but he was greatest of all in the unquenchable ardour of spirit and the unswerving integrity of character which redeem even failure, and are the truest consecration of success.

### 34. HERTSLET'S MAP OF EUROPE BY TREATY<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, December 25, 1875)

MR HERTSLET must excuse us if, while confessing our inability to congratulate him on the title he has chosen for his most valuable and laborious compilation, we decline, after the fashion of indolent reviewers, to suggest any other in its place. Our sole objection, however, is that the title fails to do justice to the contents of the book. Under any name, these volumes would prove as terrible to the mere dabbler in politics, and as signally useful to the historical student, the professional politician, and the journalist. No one could have been better qualified to execute the most important task which Mr<sup>2</sup> Hertslet has here accomplished with a thoroughness equally in keeping with his public position and with his personal reputation. He has long been known as one of the most devoted and meritorious officials of the Department in which he serves; and has for some time past been editor of the series of *Commercial Treaties* of which twelve volumes, besides the Index are already published, and, also, of the *British and Foreign State Papers* (vols. I-LIX, 1812-1869), which form part of the libraries of our diplomatic Missions and Consulates abroad. He has now rendered

<sup>1</sup> *The Map of Europe by Treaty; showing the various Political and Territorial Changes which have taken place since the General Peace of 1814.* With numerous Maps and Notes. By Edward Hertslet, C.B., Librarian and Keeper of the Papers, Foreign Office, 3 vols. London, Butterworths & Harrison. 1875.

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir Edward Hertslet, K.C.B.



a further service to those occupied with Foreign Affairs, more directly appreciable by the non-official public than the series aforesaid; and, inasmuch as criticism would in this instance have to address itself rather to the European Powers than to Mr Hertslet, we shall, with the exception of a few suggestions which have occurred to us while turning over his 2399 large octavo pages, confine ourselves to a brief description of the plan pursued in his work. Its enduring utility would remain incontestable even if every one of the Treaties recorded in it were torn into shreds, as, fortunately or otherwise, has already been the doom of some of them.

The object, then, of this collection is defined by its editor to be that of showing "the Changes which, by Treaty or other International Arrangements, have taken place in Europe" within the period from 1814 to 1875. The list begins with the First Peace of Paris and ends with the "Reply of the British Government to the Russian Circular of 26th September, 1874, containing Proposals for further Steps to be taken with regard to the Project for Altering the Laws and Usages of War," dated 20th January last. (Thus far, we have conscientiously allowed Mr Hertslet the full supply of capital letters which the Foreign Office loves and which, if it be somewhat restricted, we agree to consider conducive to the clearness at which that Office usually desiderates.) In pursuance of this scheme, Commercial Treaties, or international arrangements of a purely commercial character, appear as a rule to be excluded from these volumes; though, of course, where commercial stipulations form part of a political Treaty or where a political Treaty is concluded with a partially or wholly commercial end,

articles as to trade largely enter into the proper contents of the collection. Thus, while the Treaties abolishing the Stade and the Sound Dues find a place here, as affecting international relations previously in existence, the various Commercial Treaties concluded by Great Britain with France, Austria, and the Zollverein, as affecting particular countries only, are omitted. It is, however, convenience rather than principle which appears to have determined this omission, if Mr Hertslé's design really was to exclude all Treaties having no direct bearing on the changes in the political map of Europe. Otherwise, there would have been no place in his collection for the Declaration as to the non-use in war of explosives under a certain weight, or for the proposed Regulations as to the duties of neutrals in time of war. Where commercial agreements have involved the temporary surrender of State-rights, and have thus paved the way for actual political unions or absorptions, as in the case of the German Customs' Union Treaties between the several States of the old Confederation composing it, we are less reconciled to their omission. The Zollverein Treaties referred to in the Prussian Treaties with the South-German States of the year 1866 might, at all events, have been advantageously specified in a note or an appendix such as we have failed to discover.

No attempt is made to arrange the documents given in these volumes in any order but that of time—and we are glad of it, holding that a knowledge of chronology lies at the root of political, as it does of historical, wisdom. A lucid system of cross references, however, and an admirably full Index, make it easy to turn at

once to any particular Treaty or group of Treaties, and the subjects of each document are throughout succinctly analysed in tables of contents. Much additional matter had necessarily to be inserted, and it is here that the discretion of the editor could alone guide him in his selections. The period with which these volumes deal is a period of Conferences, and of the transactions at the most important of these (Vienna, Aix-la-Chapelle, Laibach, &c.) the necessary account is given under their respective dates, with references to the Protocols in the collection of State Papers. The numerous references to the Vienna Congress Treaty, the basis, during more than a generation, of the diplomatic history of Europe, are conveniently classified in the Index. The Declarations of War—documents invaluable both as remains and as monuments of history, the preambles, so to speak, of the decisive international acts of the period—are very properly inserted, together with the Treaties guaranteeing the independence or neutrality of particular States. Decrees of Annexation form an inevitable, and especially in vol. III, no inconsiderable, part of the contents of the collection, and the Protests of the annexed are very properly added or referred to. We are not, however, quite clear on what principle particular diplomatic Protests are inserted at length; and, indeed, it may perhaps be open to question what actually constitutes a Protest, as distinct from a series of observations in a despatch or in a Ministerial circular. When a despatch—like that of Lord Palmerston to Lord Durham (vol. II, p. 902)—leaves it to the Ambassador “to use his discretion as to the manner of pressing the various topics to which” the Foreign

Secretary "has adverted," it surely constitutes a Protest in a very different sense from that of the Pope against certain resolutions of the Congress of Vienna sent in by his Plenipotentiary at the Congress, Cardinal Consalvi (vol. I, p. 283). Surely, again, the archives of the Foreign Office contain a much larger number of protests of the more informal kind from the pen of Lord Palmerston, not to mention Lord Russell, than appear in this volume; and it might be asked whether it would not have been preferable, in some cases where such Protests have been inserted, to give a reference only, as has been done in the case of some of those of the German Governments whose States were annexed to Prussia (see vol. III, p. 1741, where, perhaps rather vaguely, "the inhabitants of Frankfort" are said to have protested against the annexation of their city). As it is, the collection, in this respect, wears an air of completeness which, after such examination as we have been able to give to it, we do not feel sure whether it actually possesses or need have aspired to. The Protests of Pretenders, or their Acts of Renunciation, have apparently, in such cases as those of the Spanish Bourbons, been excluded altogether—quite consistently with the general scheme of the book, though references to them, in notes or an appendix, could have done no harm.

Finally, this work has some most valuable features of its own which, so far as we remember, are wanting in such time-honoured Collections of Treaties as those of the Martens', old and young. One of these is to be found in its maps, which, in addition to special maps illustrating the endless Boundary Treaties of this period



—the most difficult, as it is often the most wearisome, topic of political and historical study, and hardly to be relished by even the most ardent of the amateurs in the International Arbitration Association—comprise maps showing the territorial changes in Europe and of its various States at what may, relatively speaking, be called “a glance.” The utility of these illustrations is incontestable, however the more frivolous eye may occasionally shrink from a closer examination, as in the case of the various maps of the Bessarabian frontier. More special thanks are due to the indefatigable editor for his Appendix of copies of, or extracts from, Treaties concluded previously to 1814, but referred to in the Treaties of the subsequent period as still in force. The practice of diplomacy works less in the dark than that of the Law; but a codification of Treaties is indispensable, if clearness in the settlement or discussion of Treaty arrangements and international difficulties in general is to characterise statesmen and their critics; and it is in this direction that this Appendix points. Another most useful Appendix is that of the Treaties between Great Britain and foreign Powers for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe, which enumerates, not only the signatories and objects of the several Treaties in question, but also, under a special heading, the British engagements undertaken in each particular instance. The only addition we could here suggest would be a specification, in cases of Guarantee, of its nature in each individual case—which might prove useful in the event of future Parliamentary references, say to Luxemburg or to Belgium. The Index, which in a work like that before us is certainly

not the least important part, we have already described as appearing to us excellent. It includes, together with the names of countries and towns with which the several Treaties are concerned, or at which they were concluded (Netherlands, Neufchatel, Nikolsburg, &c.), the names of subjects dealt with on various occasions (Balance of Power, Prisoners of War, Religion, &c.); and, with a little experience of the Index, it is manifest that it will prove capable of being used with great facility. Thus, under "Powers of Europe," it appears at once what Treaties were concluded by three, four, five, six, seven, and eight Powers respectively—in itself a most instructive survey; under "Black Sea" the whole series of treaties concerning these troublous waters, from the Peace of Adrianople down to the momentous annulling Treaty of 1871, presents itself; and under "Servia" we have a compact summary of the history of that youthful and interesting member of the European family.

We have thus endeavoured to indicate some of the more distinctive features of Mr Hertslet's book, the merits of which need no further commendation at our hands. Among the many trains of enquiry which a close study of its contents will enable a student of modern European politics to pursue is one of which we can here only suggest the general direction. Probably, ninety-nine out of a hundred persons, if asked to what particular Treaty they attributed the greatest influence over the course of European policy during the generation following upon that of the Napoleonic Wars, would reply, the Holy Alliance. In what sense this Declaration can be called a Treaty appears on the face of its terms, as given in Mr Hertslet's first volume. It was not an

international agreement at all, but a Declaration by Sovereigns, containing no engagements of any specific description. Its origin was the religious enthusiasm excited in the receptive mind of Alexander I by the speculations of a pamphleteering mystic and the revelations of a fashionable prophetess. Metternich called it *du verbiage*, and allowed his master to accede to it because of its vagueness. In no sense did it become the basis of any action, and it might in fact almost be said to have amounted to little beyond an expansion of its time-honoured exordium, "In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity." To what, we should like to ask, did the Swiss Confederation and the Hanse Towns, for example, bind themselves when they acceded to this Declaration in the year 1817? The compact which really furnished the basis for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe in the period succeeding its great disturbance by France was a humbler instrument—the Treaty of Chaumont of March 1, 1814, with which Mme de Krüdener had nothing, and the Duke of Wellington a great deal, to do. On this Treaty (printed by Mr Hertslet in an appendix—we almost wish he had begun his whole collection with it) was founded the Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia on March 25, 1815, which carried out the special undertaking of the Chaumont Treaty to maintain the order of things established by the Four Powers in France. But the Chaumont Treaty had likewise established the principle that, in order to settle future measures for the preservation of peace, and to promote a good understanding among the Four Powers, *periodical*

*meetings should be held* of the Sovereigns in person, or of their representatives. Renewed at the time of the conclusion of the Peace of Paris in November 1815, and afterwards acceded to by France, this engagement became the basis of the Five Powers system, acting on critical occasions through Congresses, which was the chief security of the Peace of Europe down to our own days.

The fundamental stipulations of the Act of the Vienna Congress traced the outline of the map of Europe with which this period began. Nothing can be more true than that these stipulations likewise contained in themselves the germs of future conflicts. The history of the Vienna Congress is that of the victory of Russian and French diplomacy. Russia was established as mistress of a Polish kingdom, and could now resume, as she did resume, her Eastern policy, which led to the Crimean War. The division of Germany was proclaimed as the principle of her existence, and this division inevitably led to the struggle between Austria and Prussia which ended in the decisive War of 1866. France was left with her old frontiers, with the moral of the close of the Napoleonic Wars mitigated and obscured, and she persistently maintained under successive Governments the belief in her ability to recommence her old attempts at conquest—a belief which has resulted in the catastrophe of 1870. It would be far from difficult to prolong this series of deductions, not one of which furnishes an argument against the system of Guaranteed Treaties, though they all suggest a comment as to the foresight with which some treaties are concluded. The system itself is one at which no statesman-



like mind has a right to cavil, unless prepared with at least the idea of a substitute.

If we may conclude with an observation of a different character, we should like to express a hope that in those regions where our future diplomatists and statesmen are trained the value of the study of such collections as Mr Hertslet's may not be lost sight of. Shallowness, comforted by inexperience, can alone venture on the assertion that questions of foreign policy may be solved as they arise, and that the lesser officials of our Foreign Department, at all events, may (after passing their more or less elementary examinations) be left to pick up their knowledge as law students used to pick up theirs in Chambers. At the Universities and elsewhere astonishingly little has been done to provide such preliminary training, or to take advantage of such appliances for it as already exist. Nor do we possess any special institution like that which, if we may judge from the published labours of one of its teachers, is sure in time to bear good fruit at Paris. The present is not the occasion to enlarge upon this important subject; but it is impossible to close Mr Hertslet's collection without expressing a hope that it may become something more than a mere book of reference, and may take its place, together with similar works, among the means, neither too abundant nor too largely used, of systematic political study.

## 35. MEMOIRS OF SIR ROBERT MORIER<sup>1</sup>

(*The Manchester Guardian*, November 23, 1911)

IT will, of course, be noticed that for these *Memoirs and Letters* of her father, a man the originality of whose genius even a life of service under the Foreign Office failed to extinguish, Mrs Rosslyn Wemyss has fixed a distinct *terminus ad quem*—the year (1876) in which, after a long period of disappointment and neglect, he was first appointed to a Legation of his own (at Lisbon). From the Portuguese, Sir Robert Morier was soon transferred to the Spanish, capital, and thence again, at a rate of speed unknown to his earlier diplomatic experiences, promoted to the embassy at St Petersburg, where Gortchakoff traditions would have alone sufficed to make him a *persona gratissima*, and where he, beyond doubt, materially contributed to the preservation of peace between the two Asiatic neighbours. He died, virtually still in harness, in 1893—a date comparatively remote from the season of his earlier diplomatic activity recorded in these volumes. But they may be said to gain in unity what they lose in completeness; for it was on Germany—including, during the greater part of his service there, Austria—and on our relations to Germany that his attention was concentrated throughout practically the whole of the first twenty-three years of his career, and it was Germany from which, during

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Robert Morier, G.C.B., from 1826 to 1876.* By his Daughter, Mrs Rosslyn Wemyss. London: Edward Arnold. Two vols. 1911.

the remaining seventeen years, something besides fate shut him out. The present publication is, therefore, not less well conceived in its limits than opportune in its incidence. The preliminaries of Morier's public life could hardly be omitted like its concluding stages, for, without the influences of descent and home, he could hardly have become what he was—an observer of extraordinary quickness and penetrating insight, and a writer of rare lucidity and captivating force of expression, while at the same time an ardent supporter of whatever cause he espoused and an uncompromising hater of whatever personality he suspected. He sprang from a diplomatic and consular nest: besides his grandfather and his father, two of his uncles were in one or the other of the services, nor was the author of *Hadji Baba* the only one of the brothers who illustrated, besides their political capacity, their *Lust zu fabulieren*. His mother was the brightest as well as the most affectionate of his correspondents; and her death, in 1855, was a terrible blow to both father and son, whom the remembrance of her united more closely than ever. Furthermore, his father had for the last thirty years of his life a well-founded and well-established grievance against the most popular of English Foreign Secretaries, Lord Palmerston; and this he handed on to his son Robert (called Burnet in his family, after a less intensely-minded ancestor) till he could exchange it for a grievance of his own, against a still greater man, Prince Bismarck. Oxford diversified these parental influences by introducing him to the intimacy of Jowett ("certainly," he wrote at the time, one of "the two greatest men of the age," the other being A. P. Stanley),

who, for his part at all events, supplied, through a great part of his life, that most valuable kind of criticism which has its root in sympathy. Nobody—unless perhaps the younger Stockmar, whose own illustrious father regarded Morier as his “adopted son”—ever told the passionate diplomatist (then sunk in despondency and desirous of some optimistic *Anflüge* out of Plato) so much truth about himself: “I am afraid that you will never get on if you do not assume a more Christian temper. I think as you get older that life is too short to allow a person to indulge all his aversions.” Of course, Jowett well knew the other side of the medal, and it was the enthusiasms rather than the antipathies of his friend which endeared him to the prophet of an “effectiveness” with which both sorts of emotion could not but interfere. If the truth must out, there can be no use in denying that in some great as well as in certain small points Morier was addicted to vanity; but the great ideas and the high aspirations among which he moved familiarly forbid insistence on this forgettable side of his character.

It may be doubted (though parallels are not wanting of English diplomatists who have counted for so much as Morier did in the history of another State) whether any agent of our foreign policy, from the days of Elizabeth to those of Victoria, has ever been more steeped in knowledge of the institutions and of the actual life and thought of the nation where he “lay.” The time at which these *Memoirs* of Morier see the light is the least likely to underrate the purpose to which, during his “best” years, he consciously gave up his best powers. “The devoting myself,” he wrote, almost



savagely, in 1863—the critical year, as it proved, of his life, and the year preceding that in which Great Britain by deliberate obtuseness alienated for many a day the goodwill of the German people—“to one idea of this kind [the Anglo-German Alliance] is the very worst thing professionally which a man can do.” On the other hand, he had, long since, reached the conviction that there was nothing which, in the long run, would shut out a good (or, which means the same thing, a real) understanding between the two nations except popular ignorance, fostered by official perversity, and exacerbated by the thoughtlessness of platform and press. He had resolved to contribute, so far as he could, to the removal of these obstacles; and the self-sacrifice involved in his sustained endeavour to carry out this resolution remains his chief title to enduring remembrance.

The chief value of these *Memoirs*, accordingly, consists not so much in their personal reminiscences, although Morier, even when swayed by “violent love or hate,” could produce admirable portraits, such as those of the Emperor William I (of William II he could not know much personally, though it was by his advice that his firm friend Dr Hintzpeter was chosen as the future sovereign’s tutor) and of Gortchakoff, or throw off a crayon sketch like the concluding sketch of Thiers, who “regards Bismarck as a Prussian Thiers more favoured by circumstances than the French original.” There was scarcely an important phase or episode of contemporary German politics in which this born publicist did not arrive at self-orientation by means of a letter, memorandum, or essay, taking a complete

survey of it and, at the same time, entering into its very core. During the first visit paid by him to Germany after the beginning of his *Wanderjahre* in 1850, he made the acquaintance of Roggenbach, one of the earliest, as he was one of the most consistent, advocates of the scheme of German unity destined for virtual realisation, and of Samver, the well-equipped champion of what was to prove in the end the *victa causa* of the Augustenburg Succession. He was thus aided in mastering by personal observation the essence of the cause which the Schleswig-Holsteiners had then risen to defend in arms. In 1853, he was appointed to an unpaid *attaché*ship at Vienna by Lord Clarendon (whose foreign policy, in German affairs by no means inclined to precipitancy, is judged by him with a friendly eye); and, during his tenure of this post, he produced a most interesting and, in its way, unique report on the Military Frontier (required for the sake of hints for the Cape Military Colonies proposed after the Crimean War). But it was after he had been transferred as a paid *attaché* to Berlin in 1858 that his activity began to rise to its height and that his pen was constantly at work on productions of lasting historical significance. Prince Albert had for some time marked him out as a diplomatic agent preeminently capable of promoting intimate relations between Prussia and England, and the recent marriage of the Princess Royal to Prince Frederick William seemed to indicate the beginning of the fulfilment of hopes which the Prince and his mentor Stockmar had alike at heart. Morier's communications in the next two or three years are full of the greatest interest, and include a masterly *exposé* of the political condition

of Prussia (1859) and a thorough-going memorandum on the constitutional conflict in Electoral Hesse. This he traces back to its origins, although, in truth, its second stage was almost more significant than its first had been of the *impasse* to which the working of the existing Federal Constitution of Germany had been reduced. In 1863, the scene changed at Berlin, and, after the entry of Bismarck into office, the Constitutional conflict, on which Morier reported with passionate intensity, was that between King and Parliament in Prussia itself. No one who remembers those days will regard the reflection in Morier's letters of the spirit in which it was waged by Bismarck's opponents as exaggerated, though it is easy to see that his own judgment is warped by his own hatred of the bold Minister himself. On the grounds of that hatred, which was returned in kind, it is unnecessary to enlarge; where Bismarck could not subdue a will opposed to his own, he sought to crush it, and in Morier he saw, nor saw without reason, the intimate of the Heir to the Throne, between whom and himself there never existed more than a *modus vivendi*. At the same time, though William I was not intellectually a strong man, it was in 1863, or indeed at any date in his reign, perverse to describe him as "the mere tool of a wicked and unscrupulous faction, whose passions he has tasked himself, contrary to all Hohenzollern precedent, to share." There would be less exaggeration in saying that the reorganisation scheme pure and simple had become part of the King's personal creed.

As is well known, the occasion which led to what Morier calls his eight years' "boycott" at the Foreign

Office was connected with the Schleswig-Holstein question, which in 1863 had once more assumed an acute form. He regarded himself as "the moral author" of Lord John Russell's celebrated Coburg despatch of September 24th of that year, suggesting a settlement which, if adopted, might have prevented the War of the following year and its far-reaching consequences, and which even Bismarck viewed with favourable eyes. Possibly Morier's knowledge and his use of it were not so peculiar to himself as he seems to have thought—but let that pass. There can be no doubt that the proposal was thwarted by a calculated Danish obstinacy, encouraged by the bluster of Palmerston, the *Times*, and the pensive British public, and that the first of the tares were thus successfully sown which for long years to come choked the crop, whenever it arose, of more cordial feelings between two great and kindred peoples. Unluckily, a pamphlet which had been anonymously published by Morier in 1863 *at Lord Russell's request*, in order to explain the Foreign Secretary's position and change the current of public opinion on the whole question, and which served as Kinglake's text in the famous Confidence debate of February, 1864, was misinterpreted as a deliverance inspired by the Prussian Crown-princess in the Augustenburg interest, and thus as an act of treachery on the part of the author (whose name gradually "transpired") towards his Chief and the Foreign Office. How the interpretation should ever have approved itself to Lord Russell himself may pass belief; but it is only too certain that the cloud which passed over Anglo-German relations obscured for a long period the career of one of our ablest diplomatists.



His memorandum on the Anglo-Austrian Commercial Treaty of 1865, of which he had been named one of the British negotiators, was characteristically followed, in 1866, by another State-paper, of wider historical interest, on the whole question of the Hungarian Constitution in connexion with the proposed *Ausgleich*; and then, instead of having been promoted, in accordance with successive offers, to Japan and Greece, he was accredited to the Diet at Frankfort (which never sat there again) and to Hesse-Darmstadt. From this retreat, it was his fate to watch the swift progress of the great Austro-Prussian War and its still more momentous successor. Unfortunately, his view of both these conflicts was coloured by personal feeling—he was convinced that he had been accused at Berlin of anti-Prussian intrigue by his Prussian colleague (whose name, though disguised as “M. de X.,” is easily ascertainable from the *Almanach de Gotha*), and that Bismarck had made a formal complaint with a view to his recall. But the clearness of his general political insight, nevertheless, remained undimmed; and, in 1868, he records without contradiction the information of the Crown-prince that Bismarck was for the preservation, if possible, of peace. When the final struggle of 1870 broke out, he did not foresee its immediate military course, but had no doubt of its ultimate result. He thought, as many still think, that England could have stopped the War, and, while admitting (on dubious grounds) “that it was impolitic on the part of Germany to demand Alsace and Lorraine,” could not admit that “because it shocks the conscience of Mr F—— H—— and Mr Bradlaugh, it is a crime.” Such utterances too

strongly suggest the *à priori* fault-finder; while, in the comments, on the "war scare of 1875," antipathy to "the Chauvinist Baal enthroned at Berlin" plays too manifest a part, and the account of the combination by which the Chancellor's designs are said to have been foiled does not carry complete conviction. On the other hand, the literary labours of Morier in these years are equal to anything that ever proceeded from his pen, and prove how powerful was his grasp of great national movements and interests throughout the time of his diplomatic career in Germany. His essay on *Agrarian Legislation in Prussia* (1869) one remembers as a historical treatise worthy, not only of the Cobden Club, but of a writer who from his youth up had understood the full value of the reforms of Stein; and his articles in *Macmillan's* on the *Culturkampf*, which were ascribed to Döllinger, could have received no more fitting praise. Shortly afterwards, he produced an essay on Local Government, which earned the commendations of Gneist, and, being translated into various languages, was perhaps the most widely spread of its author's writings. He will, thus, remain unforgotten by generations to which the old personal feuds will seem dead and buried. If we recall them here, it is because they crippled the usefulness of what together with the achievements on which he insists, ought to have formed the really central part of a brilliant career.

### 36. THE HOHENLOHE MEMOIRS<sup>1</sup>

(*The Manchester Guardian*, November 6, 1906)

SOME brief account of the substance of what is contained in the *Memoirs* of the late Prince Hohenlohe, third Chancellor of the German Empire, and beyond all question one of its chief makers, may be of service, even at this date, to the readers of the *Manchester Guardian*. It is true that the bloom has already worn off the "plums" with which the public has been regaled from the concluding sections of the work. Rarely has the telegraph, as a literary agency suited to all customers, been set to work with so much promptitude and achieved its task with such completeness. It is satisfactory to find that an English translation is announced of a book possessed of so solid a historical value; for nobody will be disappointed by it, unless he should expect to find in the work as a whole an expanded collection of Court gossip and select scandal such as fluttered Berlin society in the last generation on the publication of Alexander von Humboldt's correspondence with Varnhagen von Ense, or even the experiences of a life condensed with a classical pithiness that makes Bismarck in his *Reflexions and Reminiscences* appear even more himself than either in his conversations or in his letters. Prince Hohenlohe writes clearly and agreeably, and here and there with

<sup>1</sup> *Denkwürdigkeiten des Fürsten Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst*. Im Auftrage des Prinzen Alexander zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst herausgegeben von Friedrich Curtius. 2 vols. Stuttgart und Leipzig, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1907.

a spice of *malice*, in the French sense of the word; but he is neither an epigrammatist nor a *raconteur*, and he lights up no hidden galleries in any of the palaces accustomed to the fall of his footstep. As for "political revelations" proper, I remain in doubt whether, with the exception of the information as to the Defensive Alliance negotiated by Bismarck with Austria in the autumn of 1879—by way of a second hedge within the circle of the Alliance of the Three Emperors—and perhaps of a rather less veiled account than has hitherto been accessible of Bismarck's policy in Alsace-Lorraine after the annexation, these *Memoirs* can be said to furnish any definite addition to what is already known to us concerning the complicated history of German foreign policy from the end of the Great War onwards.

What may be the proper criterion of indiscretions of another sort, which have exposed the representative of the author of these *Memoirs* to the censure of the reigning German Emperor, I have no desire to determine. In justice to that Sovereign, however, it should be remembered how, in order "to save appearances [and] gird the sphere" in which he moves and has his being, a great deal of prescription and a great deal of observance are alike indispensable. That, more especially in the latter half of the second volume, these *Memoirs* contain not a few passages which must, as a matter of course, have given offence to any reigning family which they concerned, is quite undeniable; and it should always be remembered that a Royal personage cannot retaliate—a course quite open to the present Prince Bismarck. But, though such indiscretions are certainly not absent from these pages, and though here and there in them occur



essential uglinesses of phrase and even pettinesses of passing comment, through which, had they been presented to him as awaiting publication, Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe, a *grand seigneur* every inch of him, would assuredly have struck his pen, these *personalia* cannot, taken all in all, be said to amount to very much. For not only are they, both in themselves and in proportion to the book as a whole, few in number, but they can rarely be said to do more than accentuate an already existing impression, or place facts in a really new light for those who have observed, even without coming very near to it, the last half-century of German political life. Many touches, for instance, illustrate the extraordinary personal jealousies that detracted so seriously from the single-mindedness of Bismarck's system of rule and conflicted with the natural large-heartedness of the man.

But, on this head, there is little fresh to tell. Although in 1888, when Governor-general of Alsace-Lorraine, Prince Hohenlohe could not repress a passing (and very possibly imaginary) suspicion that the Chancellor's ill offices to him in that capacity were due to the great Minister's jealousy of the supposed intention to make the governorship hereditary in the Hohenlohe family, while Bismarck himself had not been created *Hereditary* Duke of Lauenburg. More serious is the consistent attribution of Bismarck's efforts to prevent the adoption of a more conciliatory administrative system in the *Reichslande* to his wish of keeping France divided and weak by making her uncomfortable on her frontier. On the other hand, we see more clearly than ever in these volumes how Bismarck, in his turn, had to contend

against unextinguishable jealousies—that of the Princes of the Empire, among whom signs of rejoicing were not wanting at his fall, and that of the military element proper in the service of the State—the “Generals,”—in whom the good Emperor William I never ceased to believe, and who never ceased to believe in themselves as the chief organs of the monarchy. Prince Hohenlohe, too, had to contend against these military pretensions; but, in the main, he possessed his soul in silence, and his outburst (in December, 1898) against the narrowness of Prussian *Junkerdom* and its *insouciance* as to the destinies of the Empire is something better than a barren lament. “As from 1866 to 1870 I laboured for the union of South and North, so now my endeavour must be to keep Prussia true to the Empire.”

And similarly with other passages in these *Memoirs* which have been diligently marked out for public attention. The kindly disposition, coupled with a loyal and courageous adherence to a course of action or policy once deliberately adopted, which distinguished the Emperor William I, has never obscured the fact that in his last years, in proportion as his strength inevitably began to fail, the *spiritus* of his great Minister (as Wallenstein would have phrased it) exercised a more and more complete ascendancy over his own. It is, no doubt, somewhat surprising to find the Emperor, at a date relatively so early as 1874, complaining to Hohenlohe at Babelsberg that “Bismarck was always without more ado threatening resignation in order to carry his point,” and that “this sort of thing could not go on. Bismarck was in a state of great excitement, and it was impossible to say whither he would still lead him (the Emperor).” “This

sort of thing" went on for some fourteen years, although anyone who is familiar with the ways of old age knows that it was quite compatible with the results of recent laudable attempts to prove that history will judge William I to have been something more than the figure-head in the stupendous achievement that memorises his reign. Equally well known is the fact that a spirit which Bismarck's own could never repress was that of the Empress Augusta, a noble-minded Princess, whose outlook was restricted by her blinkers, and whose personal influence these *Memoirs* conclusively show to have been the only one which Bismarck had cause to dread in the "all-highest" places. Against the influence of the Crown-princess—our own Princess Royal—he was shielded (had there been need) by an antecedent jealousy. Her pathetic story—for it was pathetic, long before the mortal illness and death of her high-souled husband cast a tragic pall around it—is very gently touched in these *Memoirs*; but they render it only too clear what was no secret before, that, full of both intelligence and sympathy, she never quite learnt how to bear herself towards the problems that occupied her adopted country with the tactfulness which shows itself at times in speech and at times in silence. The very conflict with the Church of Rome provoked by Bismarck she blamed, "because it was Bismarck who had provoked it." Yet it was the carrying through of this very conflict which a Liberal member of that Church like Hohenlohe declared to be the one thing that could induce him to take up Bismarck's inheritance.

Finally, this brave lady and the chivalrous Prince for whom she was at all times ready to sacrifice herself

were transitorily placed in a cruelly false position, which, for their own sakes, it should have been made possible for them to avoid. All this was already far too well known for its verification (it is little else) to be likely to give offence, now that both she and her august mother have followed the Emperor Frederick into the grave. Must we, then, attribute the displeasure excited in the Emperor William II by the publication of these volumes to the few references which they contain to the Emperor William II himself—to his youthful desire for personal prominence and his not less youthful impetuosity of talk, together with the account to be found here of his dismissal of Bismarck and of the provocations in which the latter indulged till he had been appeased by a formal reconciliation? As for this account in particular, prejudice only could see in it aught that reflects on the honour or on the intelligence of a young Sovereign, placed in a position which in the long run no impartial observer could regard as tenable. Prince Alexander von Hohenlohe has, not without dignity, stated how he came to regard the publication of these volumes as in accordance with the natural order and propriety of things. In branding it with his censure, the Emperor William II seems to appeal from the earlier to the later Augustus, and to announce a conception of *majestas* which shall at all events bear administrative, if not judicial, consequences. Yet a monarchical authority such as the present German Emperor conceives cannot well expect to find servants like the late Prince Hohenlohe—whose own deliberate choice has brought them into line with the national policy which this authority is supposed to



represent—without leaving them a freedom of judgment entitled, in both living speech and posthumous record, to a certain margin of frank comment.

Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst belonged to one of those princely families of the Empire whose antiquity and historical significance have very few parallels in the peerages of other countries. The ancient Franconian House of the Hohenlohes can be traced back into the 11th century, when it was connected by marriage with the Salian line of Emperors; in the 13th, two Hohenlohes were invested by the Emperor Frederick II with the lordship of the Romagna and Ravenna; and, about the same time, a third, who was Grand-master of the Teutonic Order, endowed it with the domain of Mergentheim, where the Order hid its diminished head for the last three centuries, or thereabouts, of its existence. But, of all the princely families of Germany, none more persistently weakened its strength by partitions than this (in the Hohenlohe country proper, on the banks of the Tauber, it used to be said that every petty town was the residence of a sovereign), and in course of time it was also split up by religious differences. Yet, Catholic or Protestant, the Hohenlohes steadily adhered (as, in a passage of these *Memoirs*, their author declares it his resolve to adhere) to the “Ghibelline” side, following the example of their ancestor who had accompanied Henry IV on the expedition which culminated in the besieging of Pope Gregory VII in the Castle of St Angelo. When, in the collapse of 1803, the House was unable to escape mediatisation, it of course retained the right of *Ebenbürtigkeit* and continued to intermarry

with various princely families, reigning or other, in the Empire. Thus Prince Chlodwig's uncle was married to a half-sister of Queen Victoria, to whom the nephew additionally commended himself as the intimate friend and sometime fellow-student of the Prince Consort. Of the latter we have some interesting glimpses in these *Memoirs*, and full justice is done to his wide knowledge and acuteness of insight, while the touch of pedantry discernible in him is not absolutely concealed. In April, 1864—rather more than two years after the Prince Consort's death,—Queen Victoria requested Prince Hohenlohe to furnish her with a confidential report as to the condition of German politics, as to which she no longer found it possible to obtain impartial information. The two letters by which he responded to her wish, and which respectively bear date May 4th, 1864, and April 15th, 1865, are very notable historical documents, and, as the editor of these *Memoirs* observes, furnish a sort of “political credo” immediately before the outbreak of the great movement which summoned Prince Hohenlohe to political action in a position of leading importance. His connexion with the abortive movement of 1848–9, with which he had felt sufficient sympathy to figure as Ambassador of the Empire during the vicariate of Archduke John, must be passed by.

The War of 1866 found Bavaria, in whose politics Prince Hohenlohe was directly interested as a hereditary member of the Upper Chamber of the kingdom (*Reichsrath*), at a loss how to act. The sympathies of King Lewis II—a prince extremely difficult to manage even while he could still be held responsible for his

actions—were still with Austria, and the aim which after her overthrow and exclusion from Germany was pursued by the King's Government and approved by the noisier part of the population was the maintenance of the independence of the South-German States, possibly to be safeguarded by a confederation among themselves. Hohenlohe, who had from the first perceived the futility of such a policy, gave it the death-blow by a great speech delivered by him in the *Reichsrath* on August 31, 1866. (On this he touches here very briefly, though evidently quite conscious of its effectiveness.) Before the year was out, public opinion, by this time full-set in favour of his views, and the personal goodwill of the King (which was not shared by a single other member of the Royal House) had placed him at the head of Bavarian affairs. Thus a solution of the German problem on the lines of an acceptance of the Prussian hegemony by the States of the South and South-west had now become possible. In 1867, there followed an Offensive and Defensive Alliance between these States and Prussia and the negotiations—conducted with consummate skill in the face of great difficulties—that ended with Bavaria's entrance into the Zollverein. In the *Zollparlament*, which offered the first concrete presentment of the new German Unity, Hohenlohe occupied the position of First Vice-president, and thus acquired opportunities for preparing further advances.

In a different sphere of action, but one in which Hohenlohe took up his stand with not less decision and firmness, his efforts were doomed to failure. A devout Catholic, and personally connected with the

hierarchy of the Church of Rome, in which one of his brothers was a Cardinal, he never made a secret of his conviction that it behoved the State to be on its guard against the encroachments of Ultramontaniam, and to be the guardian of its own internal peace. His intimacy with Döllinger, and with Döllinger's friend, the late Lord Acton, and others supplemented his own knowledge of the whole plan of campaign, of which Jesuit policy intended the Vatican Council to be the consummation. Of the Circular Despatch of April 9, 1869, in which the Bavarian Government instructed its Ambassadors to enquire of the several European Powers whether they were prepared to confer on a collective representation to Rome as to the attitude they proposed to hold towards the Council, the entire preamble was written by Döllinger, who also formulated certain queries addressed to the Theological and Law Faculties of the Bavarian Universities. The Circular Despatch fell through, chiefly because of the refusal of the Austrian Government; but the account of the whole episode, which contains other documents from the hands of Hohenlohe and Döllinger, forms one of the most instructive passages of these *Memoirs*. Cardinal Hohenlohe remained, throughout the Council, one of the sturdiest representatives of the minority.

Early in 1870, Prince Hohenlohe resigned office in consequence of an adverse Parliamentary vote at Munich; but the great events of that year were to justify abundantly the course of action in which he had led the way. How well the writer of these lines remembers the aspect of the Bavarian capital at the time of the visit of the Crown-prince of Prussia, just after



the Declaration of War—the slim, shrinking figure of the host by the side of the heroic personality of the guest, and the extraordinary sense of uncertainty not only as to the great issue of the conflict, but as to the part to be played in it by Bavaria and the South-west, which, like a shimmering atmosphere, surrounded the chief actors in the scene! Yet it was then that the policy of Hohenlohe, though he was not an actual member of the Government, bore fruit, and that its success became assured, after Bavarian troops had fought, and fought valiantly, in the War. The Bavarian Government secured the concessions actually granted to it, which made it possible for it to adhere to the new Empire, by inducing King Lewis to offer the King of Prussia the Imperial title (detested in his heart by that excellent Sovereign). All this seemed, as it were, to follow of itself; but it was the action of Hohenlohe which had made it possible. Among certain papers found by the German troops in a villa belonging to Rouher (the “*Vice-Empereur*”) was a report of the Marquis de Cadore, French Minister at Munich in 1866–7, stating that Hohenlohe (then Bavarian Prime-minister) must be got rid of, if a cooperation of Bavaria with France in a war against Prussia was to be contemplated. “This,” writes the Prince, “is certainly the most honourable testimonial I have received during my political career.”

And in fact, though many honours, with much hard and some thankless work, still awaited him, the greatest service which he could have rendered to the national cause, and which, if his position in Bavaria and in the Empire is considered, no other person could have

rendered with such completeness, had now been performed. But it remained for him, as Vice-president of the First *Reichstag*, to carry on, under ampler conditions, the work which he had done in a similar position in the transitory *Zollparlament*. From 1874 to 1885, he was German Ambassador at Paris, and his record of these years, during which he seconded the policy of his Chief both at Paris and at the Berlin Congress in 1878, is the most entertaining part of the book, though not really that which possesses the greatest historical value. Of more direct importance for any narrative of German policy in this period will, I think, be his record of his administration of Alsace-Lorraine during the years 1885-94, and of the differences, already adverted to, between the policy which he had to carry out and the more generous and, probably, the more far-sighted one which he would have preferred to adopt. He had attained to the ripe age of seventy-four when, after the dismissal of Count Caprivi, he was called to the first administrative office in the Empire, the fortress of which, in his modest words, he had taken part in throwing up the earthworks. Of the six years in which he, till his death in July, 1901, held the Chancellorship of the Empire these volumes contain the scantiest possible account. His policy was characterised by a caution which in foreign affairs abstained from seeking opportunities of intervention and at home showed an economical conservatism which could hardly claim to be more than dilatory. But he laboured hard to the last, and, like a born diplomatist, avoided mistakes even where he could lay claim to no fresh achievements. Six months before his death, he mourned the loss of

the good Queen Victoria, "one of the few survivors from the days of his youth." His mind resembled hers in its clearness of insight and definiteness of purpose, and, like her and a few others of their generation, he was sustained by a never-failing sense of duty through a long and laborious life.

### 37. LORD BRYCE ON THE NEW GERMAN EMPIRE<sup>1</sup>

(*The Saturday Review*, October 11, 1873)

BOOKS have, and occasionally deserve, their fates. That of Professor Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, which now lies before us in a fourth edition, has been to develop from a University Prize Essay of rare promise into a historical and political treatise of permanent value. A German translation has been published of the enlarged work—no slight tribute of recognition on the part of a literary world peculiarly jealous of what it regards as its own domain. And, while English historical scholarship has just reason to be proud of the signal proof furnished by Mr Bryce's book of its vitality, the world of English politics would be benefited by the liberal infusion into it of such elements of insight and grasp as it reveals on the part of its author. The systematic study of a comprehensive subject by the light of political observation as well as of historical learning trains the student, as it were unconsciously, into fitness for other than literary tasks. It is by such a process, which is not one of everyday experience, that the schools and public life should come into vital contact with one another. Neither the sole nor the main end of historical study is to produce political capacity; the riper student alone is able to judge of the bent of his own genius;

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Roman Empire*. By James Bryce, D.C.L., Regius Professor of Civil Law in the University of Oxford. Fourth Edition. London: Macmillan & Co. 1873.



and the systematic study of history in itself involves so severe an apprenticeship that it only gradually reveals its secondary uses to those who devote their minds to it. We smile at the ardour of a new Professor of History when, with the candid ambition characteristic of an inaugural address, he proposes to train up at his feet a generation of political leaders; for we know that time may be trusted to apprise all those concerned of the occasional inadequacy of the means to the end. But, when we observe how a sustained effort finally produces something like mastery over a field of enquiry extending from the foundations of medieval political life to some of the chief political questions of our own day, we are ready to admit that the fulfilment of promise of one kind may itself be promise of another.

It is by no means only the supplementary chapter on the New German Empire, forming the distinctive feature of the new edition of Mr Bryce's book, which has suggested the above remarks, though it is to it that they more especially apply. The events of which this chapter treats, and on which it furnishes a brief but instructive comment, are chiefly of our own generation, and in part only of yesterday. Their occurrence has been accompanied, *more nostro*, by a free expression of opinion on the part of Englishmen; nor has a general kindly sympathy been wanting on our part towards the advance of Germany to political unity and greatness. This sympathy has, however, to a great extent sprung from the admiration evoked by mighty achievements, and it has frequently failed to appreciate and accompany the less immediately momentous epochs of German national progress. And it must be conceded that the

spirit in which the responsible directors of English foreign policy have met the successive changes which our generation has witnessed in German political life has been far from uniformly characterised by that intelligence which springs from knowledge. We need not carry the moral further back, though it would be easy enough to do so. For, at the Congress of Vienna, the influence of Great Britain was steadily employed to perpetuate the main political difficulties of Germany at home and abroad. Everything was then done which could be done to depress and break up the power of Prussia, and to leave Germany with a weak frontier in the West. But, to come to more recent times, how blind have British statesmen proved to the significance of the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty in nearly all its stages, how childishly was it wont to be waved aside as an unintelligible chaos of perplexities, and how wantonly was the necessity overlooked of helping to satisfy just demands, if only in order to avert the ultimate consequences of thwarting them! Mr Bryce, who has treated this subject correctly and clearly (only omitting to emphasise, in its bearing upon the question of the succession in both duchies, the significance of the Capitulation of 1460), has given English statesmen credit for an earnest intelligence at the eleventh hour which we fear it would be difficult to substantiate. He says in a note:

The inaction of England was attributed on the Continent partly to the personal influence of the Sovereign, partly to the supposed prevalence of "peace at any price" doctrines. But it really was in the main due to the fact that English statesmen found, when they looked into the matter, that the Danes were substantially in the wrong, though no doubt the hesitation of

France, without whose aid it would have been folly to stir, had something to do with the matter.

The impression that any English statesman of mark had arrived at the conclusion indicated was certainly not that left upon the minds of those who attended the debate of the year 1864 in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston, who closed it, was specially careful to confine the substance of his remarks to topics as far away as possible from the particular question. Future generations are likely to interpret this whole passage in our political life as one of unsolved doubts and difficulties, influenced by a prejudice in favour of the weaker side. On the other hand, it is certain (for Lord Russell in his quick candour has already published the fact to the world) that the Ministry were divided in their views, and that it was the unwillingness of France, rather than a prevalence of opinion in favour of Germany, which produced the decision for peace.

Again, how little alive was our foreign policy to the real significance of the projects of reform which occupied the barren period—as it seemed—between the reaction of Olmütz and Dresden and the outbreak of war with Denmark! The assumption of a benevolent attitude towards the Austrian attempt at contriving a revised Constitution of the Empire, to which Prussia would have nothing to say, was perhaps a venial error; but how little our statesmen perceived what to every German friend of progress had become an article of faith, that in the Prussian hegemony alone lay a fair prospect of a real national unity! They had so accustomed themselves to consider slowness the note of German politics, that they were unaware how the

German nation had taken to heart the lesson of the failures of 1848-9. Once more, how imperfectly had those watched the historical growth of German national feeling who believed that it would have been possible for Bismarck to conclude peace with France in 1870, on any terms but the surrender of her two German provinces! In none of these cases does it necessarily follow that British policy should have been in consonance with German national feeling; but the want of knowledge sufficient to produce an appreciation of this feeling has been a grievous defect of our policy in German questions, and is a main cause of the coldness which undoubtedly at the present moment makes itself perceptible on the part of the Germans towards ourselves.

It is therefore of the highest importance that those who watch political movements should be thoroughly able to account to themselves for the historical growth of currents of national feeling which are real motive forces in politics. Mr Bryce has shown very clearly how the motive force which has more than any other contributed to the great changes now accomplished, or in course of accomplishment, in Germany is essentially a historical sentiment. It would, however, be an error to mistake the historical sentiment in question—namely, an irrepressible desire for the recovery of national unity, and of national greatness through unity—for a mere romantic attachment to conceptions long dead and buried. The Holy Roman Empire, whose origin and decay Mr Bryce has so lucidly described, has long been regarded as a mere phantasm of the past, except here and there by some harmless dreamer of



an antiquarian turn of mind. The New German Empire is the inheritor neither of the ideas nor of the forms of its Imperial predecessor. It is the ancient German Kingdom from which so much strength went out to the Empire, while in return it received from the latter no accession beyond that of a higher dignity and a more ambitious moral significance, and not the Holy Roman Empire itself, or any semblance of it, which was revived at Versailles. For ourselves, we should be disposed to insist, even more emphatically than Mr Bryce might perhaps approve, on the fact that all but everything which was real in the old Empire was Germanic and royal, and that all but everything which was unreal was Imperial. Yet nothing could be clearer than the historical descent which Mr Bryce traces out for the Emperor William and his successors. From the old Empire the new has taken nothing of importance but the title of its head—and even this with a significant modification. The cool good sense which prompted this abstinence was, however, in complete accordance with historical propriety. A Roman Emperor crowned at Frankfort in the year 1870 would have been not only a pretentious anachronism, but a mischievous fiction. A German Emperor receiving his new dignity from the Princes of Germany, when at their head in command of a national army, is a historical truth in everything but name. For, if it had been necessary to satisfy historical purism, and possible to treat the susceptibilities of the Princes with contempt, the title of William of Prussia would have been that which Henry the Fowler wore, the sufficient title of German King.

The Imperial name, then, is nothing more than the

symbol of national unity; and this it is to which Germany has primarily and above all aspired, ever since the great War of Liberation of 1813 once more taught her people to know and respect itself. The desire for popular liberty, more especially under the forms of modern Constitutional government, has generally, but not at all times, gone hand in hand with the struggle for unity. It has not always been secondary to the latter; indeed, there have been periods—before 1848 more particularly in the South, and since that time in Prussia itself—when it has seemed to be uppermost in the popular mind. Before 1848, however, the party of progress was hampered, not only by the traditional opposition of Governments and classes, but also by the indifference with which a large proportion of the population had accustomed itself to regard questions as to form of government. The ultimate result of the Revolutions of 1848–9, and the strange issue of the Prussian Constitutional struggle of 1862, has been to weaken rather than to fortify the party of Constitutional progress. The *Reichsverfassung* of 1849, an admirably logical and complete Constitution for a democratic monarchy, has been left in its pigeon-hole by the authors of the Constitutions of the North-German Confederation and the new Empire. In Prussia, in particular, after the party of progress had not only been openly defied by Bismarck, but had been obliged to see his unconstitutional policy approve itself under the light of later events, that party has been virtually extinguished. After the immense achievements of the last few years, the so-called National-Liberal party, which may be said at the present moment to comprise the vast majority of

Prussian politicians, shows few signs of an intention to resume the endeavours of the old party of progress. Ministers remain responsible, not to the Parliament, but to the King; the right of initiating laws continues denied to private Members; the Budget can still only be rejected *en bloc*, in which case the Government may fall back on the previous year's estimate of expenditure. But what is more, the Liberal majority has proved willing that the Government should conduct a campaign against Rome on its own responsibility, and is ready to accept its policy, in this respect also, on general grounds, without requiring it to substantiate its assertion of the existence of exceptional reasons justifying an exceptional course of action. The struggle with Rome has been in a sense carried on in the dark; and the prevailing current of public opinion has been willing that it should be so.

These and other phenomena of the same kind are acquiesced in by Germans of liberal minds, partly because they attach no transcendent importance to what we regard as principles of Constitutional liberty, partly, and chiefly, because they are contented to wait and to achieve unity before all. Much remains to be done even in this direction; and, so far is the work from having been accomplished, that problems requiring the study of statesmen historically as well as politically trained must in all human probability be solved under the eyes of this or the next generation. In the first place, German Austria remains outside the Empire—an unnatural arrangement, as untrue to the spirit of German history as any violent disruption perpetrated by Napoleon I. Again, the terms on which Bavaria and

Württemberg have been admitted into the Empire must prove to be of an essentially temporary character. In general, it is as yet an open question whether the Legislatures of the several States will continue to be maintained by the side of the *Reichstag*, or whether the latter will be remodelled into an all-sufficient Imperial Parliament. Minor changes in the direction of unity, such as the abolition of the useless and possibly dangerous right of the separate States to receive and send diplomatic representatives, are merely questions of time.

Our object has been to show how emphatically a broad historical treatment, such as Mr Bryce applies to the great changes of recent occurrence in Germany, is necessary in dealing with transactions so distinctly influenced by a nation's consciousness of its past. The material forces which contribute to bring about ultimate results will not be neglected by the observer who takes moral forces into account likewise. Mr Bryce, we are glad to note, shows a healthy contempt for that school of writers who provide great nations and great men with "missions" devised *ex post facto*. Far too much, he truly points out, has been said of Prussia's "mission," as present to the eyes of her rulers throughout the course of her history. He might have illustrated this common-sense view even more fully than he has cared to do. How was it, e.g., that the Great Elector, who had the "mission" so distinctly in his mind's eye, divided his territories before his death, and broke up, so far as in him lay, the Power which was to identify itself with Germany? Mr Bryce has not scrupled to say, and we believe with perfect truth:



Neither in the words or acts of Prussia's great Frederick (nor indeed in those of his predecessors) is there a trace of what may be called Pan-Teutonic patriotism, of any enthusiasm for the greatness and happiness of Germany as a whole. His purpose is to build up a strong and well-administered Prussian kingdom; for his German neighbours he has no more regard than for Frenchmen or Swedes; for the German language and literature little but contempt. The policy of his three successors was distinctly Prussian rather than German; and the romantic Frederick William IV disappointed the hopes of the nation almost as grievously in 1849 as Frederick William III had done thirty-five years before. No European Court has been more consistently practical than that of Berlin; nor any apparently less conscious of a magnificent national vocation. Her rulers have eschewed sentimental considerations themselves, and have seldom tried to awaken them in the minds of the people, or to turn them to account where they existed. When their interests coincided with those of Germany at large, it was well; but they were not accustomed to proclaim themselves her champions, or the apostles of her national regeneration. Nevertheless it had for a long time been evident that, if a political regeneration was to be brought about by force, it was from Prussia alone of the existing principalities that anything could be hoped, since she alone united the character, the tradition, and the material power that were needed to lead the country.

It is not with unmixed feelings that we peruse in Mr Bryce's admirably lucid summary the story of the disappointment of the hopes of German political reformers, and of their sudden fulfilment by means of blood and iron. The bitterness of heart in which a tried champion of progress such as Gervinus died, and in which some equally true of heart continue to live, is intelligible enough; and it is only the shallow-minded who will condemn such Irreconcilables as these. But it is not the less true, that the nation as a whole has risen

with notable promptitude to the last opportunity which presented itself for a realisation of its hopes; and that this opportunity was the tenure of power in Prussia by Bismarck. Resolved to overthrow the predominance of Austria, he put a virtual end to the dualism of Germany; the splendid success of the French War crowned the effort; and whatever future may be in store for the Empire, its basis is not likely to be moved or changed. Mr Bryce may have to add more pages to his book; but the additions will probably admit of being included in the framework of his supplementary chapter. The new German Empire is not the passing creation of an hour of victory; it is a historical growth deeply rooted in the national soil, and on that soil, and self-determined, its future will unfold itself.

## POSTSCRIPT

(March, 1919)

I do not, after nearly half a century, write a postscript to the review reprinted above, because I find in it nothing to modify. Neither, on the other hand, am I desirous of unwriting what I wrote about the new German Empire in the autumn of 1873, when the great conflict in the midst of which it had come into existence seemed to have reached its final close in the completion of the evacuation of France. Least of all could I wish to alter a jot in my tribute to the eminence then already reached by the present Viscount Bryce as a historian, and to the promise, since fulfilled to overflowing, of his services as a statesman. A friendship which began about

the time when the original edition of *The Holy Roman Empire* made its appearance, and which I trust may last as long as our lives, will excuse a claim on the part of Lord Bryce's senior by six months to a share in the pride and pleasure inspired by his career in two hemispheres, and in two generations of contemporaries.

It was Lord Bryce himself who, when in the summer of last year I was completing a short History of Germany from 1815, suggested that I should add to my text a chapter summarising the impressions made on me by the tremendous events of the preceding four years, in their relation to the past history of the German Empire. Whether or not he, or some historian with a similar grasp of ideas and events, might have accomplished such a task, I, at least, felt unequal to it, and my volume has since made its appearance unaccompanied by any attempt of the kind. Even now, I should have continued to hold my peace, had not, within the last few months, the great world-drama to all appearance reached its catastrophe, and had not the pen of a patriotic, but understanding witness, given to the woes of the German nation a final expression, unconcealed and unmitigated except by the hinted hope of a better future, without which there remains nothing but despair.

The German Empire—for changes or retentions of names, significant in their way, need not give us pause—has, for a second time, passed away. *Fuit Ilium, et ingens Gloria Teucrorum*. And, in the December number of the journal—the *Preussische Jahrbücher*—which he has long conducted with rare political ability, but at the same time with the still rarer freedom of the historian holding himself primarily responsible to the demands

of his science, Professor Hans Delbrück, has made his *apologia*—one of the noblest and at the same time one of the most pathetic within recent remembrance. “How great has been my mistake!” it begins. And it ends with a long and penetrating series of queries; “but how could a political meditation to-day close otherwise than with queries?”

Except for these, Professor Delbrück has, on the present occasion, little to say either about the future of Germany or about the outbreak of the recent War. As to the future, should we live to see it, as its stream rolls on, we shall have material enough for commenting; with regard to the outbreak of the War, no historian can yet write with absolute conclusiveness. It is true that in this country, which neither sought the War nor shrank from it, we have felt justified in forming our opinion on the subject, and intend to stand by that opinion, unless better instructed. We believe that, whatever mistakes may, or may not, have been committed on our side—such as that of concealing, more or less, measures of preparation against a possible conflict—they cannot, in any case sensibly, weigh against the predetermination shown by Germany, in the first instance by driving Austria, and thus inevitably dragging Russia, into the War. But it is not on these issues, or on the violation of Belgian neutrality, barbarously carried out, that Professor Delbrück’s *apologia* turns.

He regrets—and here again there is nothing for it but to acquiesce in his confession—that, from a military point of view, he should have miscalculated the strength of his country. Before the outbreak of the



War, he consistently advocated a moderate policy, which might conceivably have averted that outbreak. But more than this. After the War had begun, he was never one of those who "in sinful light-heartedness reckoned on concluding peace in Paris or London." It was from a successful defensive war, and no other, that he looked for victory; and the results of the conflict up to the earlier part of last year seemed to him to have so far justified his anticipations. But what he had not foreseen was the effect of the failure of the German offensive in the spring of 1918 (attributed by him to the active entry of the Americans into the War) upon the German forces. "The campaign and the War were lost, not because the *moral* (*Stimmung*) of the army had collapsed; but the *moral* gave way, when the troops began to feel that they could no longer win the War." It is unnecessary to enter into the subsidiary question, whether the German Government would, from its own point of view, have acted more wisely in fully changing its "system" three months sooner than it did—in October—by committing the conduct of its foreign affairs to Prince Max of Baden. As it was, before he could conclude an Armistice on relatively favourable terms, the Social Democrats were "in power."

And, at this point, Professor Delbrück's argument reaches a stage where, as proceeding from a political historian of his eminence and of his unimpeachable integrity, it demands most careful consideration:

It is the Militarist-Pangermanist tendency which has brought this calamity upon Germany. But the Social-democratic party have put the seal upon it by refusing to await their

hour and, instead, conjuring up the catastrophe in the very moment when everything depended upon keeping Germany's last forces together, in order to be at least able to negotiate with the enemy, instead of having the conditions dictated to her. The responsibility for this course of action will, as events proceed, rest upon the Social-democrats, not less than the responsibility for the agitation in favour of war, for the policy of annexation, and for the U-boat war, must rest upon their adversaries.

No words could be plainer or more to the point than these. For some of us, who, for many a year before the War, sought to contribute what we could to the preservation of friendship between two great and kindred nations, there remains a question which certainly has not been spared us, in a concrete form, during the last four years. "Could you foresee what has happened?" or "Could you not foresee it?" The waning of international goodwill casts a very perceptible shadow on the wall, even if not written upon it in leading-article type. But, to say nothing of the state of feeling in our own country, has sufficient account been taken by those of us who have much occupied themselves with later German history, of the disintegrating elements in the new German Empire? Of particularism we have perhaps read enough—it is not only a picturesque, but a tenacious element in modern German life; but, for political purposes, it has virtually outlived itself. Of clericalism it is only a privileged few who can quite follow the successive and yet more disconnected workings—these have not been altogether transparent during the War, and are almost occult at the present moment. Militarism, on the other hand, has for many a long day been the "blatant beast"

of German life. The educational value of universal Conscription is by no means altogether fictitious; but the boon has been bought at a heavy cost—the sacrifice of the habit of free judgment in men, women and children—and has been accompanied by an intensification, instead of a mitigation, of class distinctions. What wonder that Social-democracy, stronger in Germany than in most countries, and conscious that some of the most important parts of its programme have there been put into practice by the State, should have succeeded in sapping the national military organisation on its most vital side, and in exploding it at the most critical moment? The actual catastrophe, and the collaboration of its elements as indicated by Delbrück, were not to be foretold; but these elements could not be ignored, nor, long before the fire was lit, could the danger of it be disregarded, or the impulse which would set it aflame be mistaken. Our friend—if we may still so call him—has pointed to the fury who applied that torch, and his meaning is the more impressive because it addresses itself to the historical experience of the ages:

The primitive myth of Hybris, whom the gods punish, is to-day being verified after the most awful fashion in our own case. The nation has followed false prophets; but who is guilty—the false prophets, or the nation that put faith in them? May I, in anticipation of an argued reply, venture to cite a generous saying, which applies alike to absolute and Constitutional monarchies, and even to the broadest of democracies? “*Les peuples ne sont jamais coupables.*”





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J. B. PEACE, M.A.,  
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